STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOL. 104, NO. 2 NEW YORK, MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 1941 NUMBER 1363

Zero Hour

As far as we can make out from the European reports, Germany has sent great armies in all directions. Everything is ready for invasion of Britain. Many divisions and fighting planes have gone into Italy. A huge army is in Rumania on the Bulgarian border; Wednesday the 8th, as we write, is said to be Der Tag for a peaceful conquest of Soviet Russia's ally, preparatory to a move against Greece or Turkey. Former dispatches have told of German concentrations in the northeast and in Norway. Some say the Soviet Union is about to be attacked, or about to resist further Balkan penetration by Hitler. Some say Turkey will fight if Bulgaria is absorbed by the Axis. Some say Hitler is about to rescue Mussolini from the stunning series of British successes in Egypt and Libya, which, if not reversed, bid fair to menace Italy herself, release British naval forces for the Atlantic, and become the turning point in the war. And others have said that Hitler, with the enforced connivance of Vichy, will counter with an attack through Spain on Gibraltar.

It is clear that nobody who will tell knows just what Hitler's next move will be. But one thing we have learned from previous experience; it is from just such a fog of conflicting rumors that a sudden and dramatic stroke usually emerges. German propaganda plants predictions of all conceivable actions, in order that the high command may act with as much surprise as possible. We are bound to say that what would surprise us most of all would be any action in the East that would mean the creation of a major new front. If Hitler moves into Bulgaria, for instance, he will do so with the expectation of a bloodless victory, knowing that Stalin is too scared to fight, no matter what provocation may be offered.

Fine Words

President Roosevelt in his address to Congress on the state of the union said most of the right things, and none of the wrong ones. This message was even fuller of felicitous phrases than usual. It put the burden of proof on the isolationists by saying America had never consented to "enforced isolation." People are not to be allowed to "clip the wings of the American eagle in order to feather their own nests." If slackers and saboteurs in industry are not moved by the power of good example, we must "use the sovereignty of government to save government." The American people are against dictators who "seek to create with the crash of a bomb."

The important items of the national program were put in convenient numerical categories. There is the three-point foreign policy—national defense, support of those resisting aggression, and no negotiated peace with conquerors. We are to keep working for the five bases of successful democracy—equality of opportunity, jobs for all, security for those who need it, civil liberty, ending of special privilege, and the use of science to improve the standard of living. For the whole world we are to seek the four essential freedoms—freedom of speech and press, freedom of worship, freedom from want, freedom from fear.

Almost everybody will applaud the familiar assertions concerning the peril of the United States, the deplorable backwardness in defense production, the

CONTENTS

The Week 35

Editorials

To Forestall Inflation 38
Have the Young Gone Sour? 39
New Dealers Still Wanted 40

General Articles

"Cost Plus" Again . Herbert Bruce Brougham 41
Who Aids the Refugee? . . . Albert Horlings 43
Burden (verse) . . . . . Richard Eberhart 46
The Men Who Make the Future . Bruce Bliven 47
Verne Marshall of Iowa . . . Dale Kramer 50
A Fighting Faith in Labor . . Max Lerner 51
Washington Notes . . . . . T. R. B. 53
A Hit and a Miss . . . . Otis Ferguson 54
The Bandwagon 55

Correspondence 55

Books in Review

The People's Theatre . . Malcolm Cowley 57
Ralph Bates's Mexico . . Bertram D. Wolfe 58
The Diary of Mankind . Solomon F. Bloom 59
The German Story . . . Lindsay Rogers 60
Framing Father . . . . Mary McCarthy 61
Homes for Dukhobors . . . V. Nabokov 61
A Reader's List 62

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1940, IN THE U.S.A. BY EDITORIAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 40 EAST 49TH ST., NEW YORK, N. Y.
ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER, NOVEMBER 6, 1914, AT THE POST OFFICE AT NEW YORK, N. Y., UNDER THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1879

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

resolution to do as much as possible, the loan of weapons to defenders of democracy, the current and impending social revolution in the world. But we detect a growing impatience with even the finest and truest of words. If Congress and the administration promptly implement what the President said with effective action, it may go down in history as a great speech. Otherwise it may rank with Prime Minister Baldwin's undeniable statement that the frontier of Britain was on the Rhine.

What He Did Not Say

One glaring omission both from Mr. Roosevelt's latest fireside chat and from his message to Congress was a clear word on labor policy. What is the administration going to do with those internal enemies of democracy and democratic law, like Henry Ford, who refuse to obey the National Labor Relations Act? A definite pronouncement on a clear but prickly question like this would be worth more than all the great generalities about democracy.

The courts continue to uphold the law in no uncertain terms. The Labor Board's orders to reinstate employees discharged for union activity and to cease anti-union activity have been upheld so far in virtually all cases. And now the Supreme Court has decided that an employer who reaches an agreement with a union is guilty of unfair labor practice if he declines to put it in writing. There is something almost mysterious about Mr. Roosevelt's long silence.

Tale of Two Bottlenecks

A shortage of aluminum is among the reasons assigned for rejection of the Auto Workers' union plan to build 500 airplanes per day. This is truly extraordinary. We have heard about the "labor bottlenecks." Now when labor offers the willing work of its hands, the bottleneck turns out to be something else again. A public which is being instructed that labor unions are bad for defense has yet to be told the full story of how bad production monopolies are for defense; in the UAW incident labor turns the spotlight back on its maligners. The Aluminum Company of America is the almost perfect monopoly. There is a smaller concern called the Reynolds Company, which is always mentioned to show that no monopoly exists, but which is not yet an important producer. The Aluminum Company has always fought expansion of public waterpower projects, though aluminum production requires vast quantities of cheap power. It is now increasing its ingot capacity, but its production still seems geared to the thought that no one will solve the plane-production problem; a really smashing solution here, as the UAW proposed, would leave Alcoa high and dry. We have always held that private monopolies were bad for the people; a production crisis restates this truth in neon lights.

Name Your Experts

Whether the shortage of aluminum actually exists, we don't know; but we doubt that it would be an insuperable obstacle to carrying out the Auto Workers' plan. For that matter, we doubt whether any of the other objections brought forward are actually insuperable. The painful truth seems to be that those who have been fighting this plan have done so partly at least because it came from labor. The Associated Press on January 1 carried an article in which "high defense production experts" were quoted as raising a whole string of objections. Subsequently it was impossible to find any Washington expert who would admit having given such a statement, or would verify its criticisms of the Auto Workers' plan. This sounds like a really shocking situation; apparently some Tory official in the NDAC, calling himself "high defense production experts," has tried anonymously to smear the proposal for reasons that have nothing to do with effective defense. If he can be identified, he should certainly be asked to resign.

Franco's Two Faces

Francisco Largo Caballero, Spanish Republican Premier during the early days of the civil war, has long been living in France. We now learn that he has been arrested in Marseilles and is being held incommunicado. It is feared that he will soon be turned over to Franco to be executed, as has been done with Luis Companys and other distinguished Republican figures. Indeed, this may have taken place already. The arrest of Largo Caballero coincided with the visit of the German Ambassador, Otto Abetz, to Vichy, and may have been part of Hitler's new and sterner terms. Franco continues his attempt to get wheat and other foods, medical supplies and money from the United States, aided by a little nest of pro-fascists in the American State Department. For these purposes he pretends to be an orderly and civilized ruler of a respectable state. But even Franco must realize how a cold-blooded policy of wholesale assassination of his enemies must alienate American opinion.

Hail and Farewell

"Mr. Kennedy was in some respects an unusual diplomat," writes Janus in The London Spectator. "On the day he left England finally, a telegram addressed to the editor of this journal by name reached the Spectator office. It ran as follows:

> Tried to get you unsuccessfully on telephone cannot leave England without personally thanking you for your many kindnesses to me during my stay, and it is with real regret that I leave. – Joe Kennedy

"It was a warm-hearted message," says Janus. "The odd thing is that the recipient, it so happened, had

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

never had the fortune to meet Mr. Kennedy, or even so much as see him, during his stay in London."

To Germany, via Russia?

For years after the end of the World War liberals used to scare each other with horror stories concerning wicked capitalists who had traded with the enemy via neutral nations. They were wicked; we hold no brief for them. But the modern version of this practice is even more shocking than the old one. It involves the American cotton farmer, no capitalist, and the Soviet Union, which scorns capitalist methods. Official Department of Agriculture reports show that Russia (after buying less than 1,000 bales of cotton per year from us since 1935) has actively entered our cotton market, purchasing 54,000 bales in October and 44,761 bales in November. The New York Cotton Exchange reveals that this rate of purchase was maintained in December. Does Russia need this cotton for her own use or is she sending it to Germany? She has not required our cotton for five years. Her own reports show that she has just had the largest crop in her history, producing 4,300,000 bales, a rise of 300,000 bales over 1939.

These figures are suspicious, to say the very least. There are persistent reports of heavy freight movements to Germany from Vladivostok, the latest declaring that Japanese goods are moving to the Nazis by this route. Is American cotton being transported in the same way? Even if the American cotton remains in Russia, but releases a corresponding amount of Russian cotton for Germany, is not the American guilt the same? The State Department, the FBI and the Dies Committee are searching the country for totalitarian conspiracies, but they have not discovered anything so important as this story, which they can verify by a short stroll to the Department of Agriculture.

Clergymen, Lawyers: Note!

A timely and intelligent ruling that can avert much unnecessary friction between the government and the Protestant churches, has been made by the Illinois administrators of the Selective Service System, with the approval of National Director Clarence Dykstra. Howard Schomer, a Protestant minister, assistant to the Dean of the University of Chicago Chapel, refused to register under the Conscription Act on the ground that he could not conscientiously accept the automatic exemption from service granted to him as a clergyman. This exemption clause was written into the act at the insistence of the Roman Catholic Church. It is consistent with the Roman Catholic conception of the priesthood but, in the opinion of numerous Protestants, including many divinity students and young ministers subject to the draft, is a contradiction of the cardinal principle of the Reformation—the universal priesthood of all believers. In the Schomer case, the Illinois Board ruled that

> the Selective Service System has no desire to force a minister of religion or a theological student to accept automatic deferment by being placed in Class 4d. . . . In case any registrant entitled to such specific deferment wishes to waive being classified in Class 4d, he can accomplish his desire by making an appropriate notation in the "Registrant's Statement Regarding Classification" section, on the middle of page 7 of the questionnaire. . . .

The ruling further stated that this procedure will permit a registrant to take advantage of any other of his rights under the provisions of the selective-service law. He may, in other words, serve as any other citizen does in the military program of the government or may obtain classification as a conscientious objector. The Illinois precedent should be noted by clergymen, lawyers and members of local draft boards throughout the country.

News Notes of a Week

Singing and yelling Australians stormed Bardia, and the "Battle of the Nile" ended with six more Italian generals and 30,000 more Italian troops on the way to Egypt with their hands above their heads. British tanks were on the way to Tobruk. . . . Athens reported that Greek troops had pushed forward on their way to Valona and German aviators were reported flying to the rescue. . . . Italian official statements on the fighting in Albania and Libya were full of enthusiasm. The British capture of Bardia was described as "a Pyrrhic victory" and a few more like it would see Britain "brought to her knees." As for Albania, "in twenty days Greek attacks have not brought them forward one single mile." For further information, see your local paper. . . . Captain Gaston Robert of the French Foreign Legion was acquitted of de Gaullist activities by a military court. The verdict suggested a further stiffening of Vichy backbone. . . . If Hitler decides to fight a two-front war, Turkey still insists she will be among those found fighting. . . . "Unidentified aircraft" raided Ireland four times, causing deaths and property damage in Dublin and the nearby countryside. The bombs were identified as of German make. The meaning of the bombings was obscure. The result was an official protest—and the erection of invasion barricades on Irish roads.

Franklin D. Roosevelt was finally elected President of the United States for four years more, when the Senate and the House confirmed the Electoral College poll: 449 votes for Roosevelt and Wallace, 82 for Willkie and McNary. . . . Thirteen international unions (AFL) in the metal trades adopted a policy of no strikes on defense orders. . . . Eleven navy fliers died in a plane crash on a California mountain. . . . William R. Davis, oil man, was reported to have a big war metal deal under way, Mexico to Germany, via Japanese boats and Russian railroads. . . . Unusually heavy traffic in mercury, by this route, is reported.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To Forestall Inflation

THERE WILL BE little disagreement with the purpose of the Federal Reserve Board in asking Congress for measures to help prevent future inflation. All well informed persons agree that while inflation was never possible during the long years when anti-New Dealers were using it as a bogey man, and is not imminent even now, there is a real danger of a trend in that direction before long unless the correct policies are followed.

If the Board's proposal had come from Senator Glass or any other of the die-hard financial conservatives who have always opposed expansionist monetary policies, it would deserve little attention. But it was presented by Board Chairman Marriner S. Eccles, who has always been strongly in favor of easy money as long as unemployment and lack of full production were a problem.

Mr. Eccles' views on the general theory of monetary management seem to us entirely logical. While men are on the streets and factories are idle, there is need for great efforts to put money into circulation, including large-scale government spending financed by bank loans. But when we approach full use of our productive resources and there are scarcities of goods, the situation is reversed. The quantity and velocity of monetary circulation are bound to increase, but if they grow faster than the output of goods, prices will rise, and if this expansion is allowed to get out of control, a damaging inflation, with all its evil results, is likely. It may be added that the danger is redoubled under war conditions, when the earnings of the population rise far more rapidly than the output of the goods they can buy, because so much of their product is not sold to the individual consumer but to the army and navy. The scandalous profits and the soaring cost of living which could result from this situation would be damaging to the defense effort itself.

Most of the measures proposed by Mr. Eccles and the Board are intended to help the necessary control. The Board now exercises some power over the expansion of our monetary resources through the limit on reserve requirements. According to law, the banks' power to lend is set, at a maximum, by the ratio of loans to reserves. But, on account of our mountainous imports of gold, excess reserves above the legal requirements have reached unprecedented heights, and the loan expansion theoretically possible is enormous. In asking that the legal ratio be increased, and that it be allowed to double the banks' reserve requirements, the Board is therefore asking, not that its power be enlarged, but that power it once had, now lost on account of the high tide of gold, be partially restored.

To the same end is the power requested by the Board to sterilize all future imports of gold, so that they cannot further expand the bank reserves and make the situation unmanageable once more.

Another traditional power of the Reserve Board to manage our monetary supply is that exercised in its "open-market policy." If the banks buy securities, they put money into circulation; if they sell, they withdraw money from circulation. But suppose the government is continually issuing large amounts of bonds, many of which are sold to the banks. Then the open-market policy can work only one way; buying must largely exceed selling. This is just what has been happening so far under the present administration, and there is no good objection to it as long as the need is to expand monetary circulation. But when inflation threatens, the Open Market Committee of the Reserve System must be allowed to reverse the buying policy of the banks if the traditional rule is to be followed. This means either that government borrowing must stop or that the government must borrow from individual savers. Hence the recommendation that war financing be done by direct sale of government bonds to the people rather than to the banks—a policy which Secretary Morgenthau is already preparing in part to follow.

There can be no argument concerning the recommendation that the national debt limit be raised, if the government is to borrow much more money. Nor doubt that we should aim at a balanced budget, and cease borrowing if possible, "whenever the country approaches a condition of full utilization of its economic capacity."

Three minor points may arouse a good deal of controversy but are relatively unimportant. The Board wants the President's power to devalue the dollar ended. He has stated many times that he does not intend to use it again; the situation which called for the power has changed. The Board asks that the Treasury's authority to issue $3,000,000,000 of fiat money be rescinded. This power has never been used and certainly would not be used by the present administration. It has more effective ways of expanding the amount of money. Finally the Board asks that the Treasury's power to issue currency against purchases of foreign silver be repealed. The silver-purchasing policy was always a foolish one, enacted largely through the pressure of the domestic silver producers. Yet purchases of silver from Mexico and China may now be in the interest of national defense.

It must be noted, however, that such of these powers as are to be exercised within the Reserve System look to an old-fashioned type of remedy, appropriate enough to a business economy, but neither adequate nor perhaps salutary in the new situation. It is sought to prevent inflation by making money scarce and dear. The Board goes to the extent of looking toward not only higher interest rates on short-term loans but a higher basic interest rate on long-term securities. This means a higher defense cost, the encouragement of a *rentier* class, and interference with New Deal policies such as housing and farm mortgages at low

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rates, a policy which is independent of temporary money conditions. The Board further recommends shifting of control over reserve requirements from the Board of Governors, who are government officials, to the Open Market Committee, which is composed largely of private individuals representing bankers and business men. It has always been a theory of the financial conservatives that private bankers should check government's "unsound" financial tendencies, but this notion fits ill with the democratic theory of the governmental power over business and finance.

War inflation may better be controlled by more direct influence of the government over prices and the rationing of credit. New and more far-reaching measures, not yet elaborated in detail, are likely to be required. It is not necessary to stop the flow of cheap money in desirable directions in order to prevent its general use in promoting inflation. Nor is it wise to turn over control of our fiscal machinery to conservative business interests. Far more ingenious devices—such as the Keynes plan for deferred saving by consumers—are likely to provide a part of the real answer to inflation. If Congress does what the Reserve Board asks and nothing more, we are likely in the end to find ourselves in a dilemma where we must choose between sanctioning inflation and hampering defense expenditure, or between expansion of industry for the production of necessary social welfare and a "sound" monetary policy.

Have the Young Gone Sour?

TO THE NEWSPAPER READER the meetings of the national student organizations in or near New York over the Christmas holidays must have seemed a curiously jumbled affair. There were splits and debates, charges and recriminations, ejection resolutions that didn't pass and mergers that didn't merge. Very much like their elders, one is tempted to say, with a shrug; or else one dismisses the whole thing as kid stuff on the part of a cynical generation which has gone sour on us.

If we do that we're thinking off the top of our heads. Before we read our own fears and disillusion into our view of the college generation, let's try to see clearly what they are up to.

There were three principal organizations meeting in New York, each of them independent, yet no one of them can be understood without reference to the other two. One was the decidedly leftish American Student Union (ASU), around which many a storm has raged in the past. The second was the centerish National Student Federation (NSF), an organization of college student councils. The third was the New Dealish servicing body, the International Student Service (ISS), which has forged into prominence in America in the past year.

The ASU, it is scarcely a secret to say, is Communist-dominated in its leadership, although it still allows a minority of seven opposition members in its cabinet, or controlling group. In its meetings this year it followed the new party line: anti-British, anti-intervention, anti-New Deal. But its great concern was to attack the ISS. To understand this, one must understand that the ASU, once very strong in the colleges during the Popular Front period, has been losing much of its strength in the past two years. The ISS, originally formed to help European student victims of Hitler, has shown vigor recently as a sort of clearing-house for student groups with a pro-democratic and anti-fascist outlook. It has just merged with the Work Camps for Democracy, which is working on a program for setting up summer work camps where students can get to know the structure and the problems of a community and do specific jobs for it with their own hands. Another proposed merger—of the ISS with the NSF, which has been relatively inactive in the past on account of insufficient funds—seems to have been handled badly in the NSF convention, and failed to go through.

But behind these tactics and maneuvers there is a basic clash of two philosophies of student action. In the early years of the depression the Communists did a good job of helping young people to shake themselves out of their traditional lethargy, in college and out. But the cost was high—a commitment to the Communist leadership of the ASU and the American Youth Congress. Since the Nazi-Soviet pact and the war, the crucial thing has been for a democratic youth movement to free itself, and reorganize its energies. For the first time now, it can be said that the first job is well on its way to completion. But the second job still remains to be done. The ISS cannot, by its very nature, serve as a unifying organization to do for democratic purposes the job of helping students solve their own internal problems of democracy in the colleges, and think clearly about democracy in the world outside. It can clear the way. But we are still waiting for a real national democratic organization of students, with an energetic leadership.

At the ISS meeting Mrs. Roosevelt, speaking for herself, expressed her belief in the need for some universal (*i.e.*, compulsory) youth service. The ASU has used that to accuse the ISS of being the spearhead of the administration drive for a compulsory youth service. The truth is that in discussions after Mrs. Roosevelt's speech, the ISS delegates and the leadership were strongly opposed to the universal feature in her suggestion. As usual, Mrs. Roosevelt has had the courage of going out on a limb. Her record is not one to warrant the charge that she is aiming at injecting youth with the totalitarian spirit. She deserves, and American youth deserve, to have this question discussed calmly and on its merits.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New Dealers Still Wanted

A GREAT MANY PEOPLE who have not liked the New Deal have been afraid to attack President Roosevelt directly in connection with it. They have therefore picked out associates of his for ridicule or abuse. At one time, Rexford G. Tugwell was the victim of much of this sort of treatment. Since his departure, the criticisms of him, 95 percent of them entirely unjustified, have died away. Instead, the hostile searchlight has been turned on Tom Corcoran and Ben Cohen. They have been attacked in the daily press, in magazines—The Saturday Evening Post has been particularly harsh—and through every other medium of publicity.

This attack has been as unfair in their case as in that of Mr. Tugwell. Corcoran and Cohen happen to be two brilliant young lawyers, patriotic American citizens, who have worked unremittingly over long years to try to make this country a better place for its people. An astounding proportion of the monuments of the New Deal still standing are theirs. The "Truth in Securities" Act was so carefully drafted by Ben Cohen that now, eight years later, lawyers are still hunting for the loopholes without success. This act, the team's first joint effort, is the cornerstone of federal control of financial manipulation and dishonest stock-exchange practices.

The Holding Company Act of 1935, which was their baby from start to finish, put an end to utility "private socialism." Not only did this ubiquitous pair draft and aid in obtaining the enactment of these laws, but they protected them against the onslaughts of Wall Street lawyers. When they successfully outwitted John W. Davis in his attack on federal financial legislation in the notorious Burco case, they made regulation of high finance an accepted function of democratic government.

The major social legislation of the President's second term—the wages-and-hours law—was largely the result of their efforts. If, as is confidently expected, the Supreme Court holds the law constitutional in the cases now before it—which will necessitate the overruling of the old child-labor decision—a tremendous struggle to uproot this stumbling block for federal, social and economic regulation will have been won.

More important than any specific achievement has been the position of these two men as the rallying point for progressive thought within the administration. To them the New Dealers have come for help when some timid civil servant or outright obstructionist in an administrative agency was blocking efforts to accomplish a much-needed end. Unlike many other liberals, Corcoran and Cohen have understood not only the desirable goal but the necessity of getting there one step at a time.

We recall, these facts, well known to all insiders in Washington, because disturbing rumors have recently been heard that Corcoran and Cohen are planning to leave the government to enter the private practice of law. These reports seem to be based on the idea that the President has grown cool toward the program of internal reform and improvement, on the ground that nothing now matters except national defense.

This brief statement packs away a whole series of false assumptions. In the first place, we are aware of no reliable evidence that the President has abandoned his program for domestic reform; he certainly did not sound like it in his message to Congress, when he advocated increased old-age pensions, unemployment insurance, medical care for the poor and taxes so high that nobody will get rich out of the national-defense efforts. But even if the President were in the state of mind that is reported, he would be wrong, and it would be the duty of his friends to tell him so as vigorously as possible. You don't defend democracy by laying it aside in cotton wool for the duration of the stormy period; as Samuel Grafton has so often pointed out, democracy defends the country rather than the contrary.

We hope therefore that the reports about Corcoran and Cohen will be proved unfounded. Good men are more urgently needed in Washington than ever before, and good New Dealers are at an even greater premium. The treatment given the Reuther plan shows how many people there are who are more concerned about "keeping labor in its place" than about defeating Hitler. There are ominous French overtones to such an incident. The presence of Corcoran, Cohen and others like them in the defense effort would help to guarantee that the story of France is not duplicated on this side of the water.

THE NEW REPUBLIC
A Journal of Opinion

Editors
BRUCE BLIVEN MALCOLM COWLEY GEORGE SOULE
STARK YOUNG

Assistant Editors
NIGEL DENNIS OTIS FERGUSON ELIZABETH HULING

Contributing Editors
H. N. BRAILSFORD JOHN T. FLYNN E. C. LINDEMAN
JONATHAN MITCHELL R. G. TUGWELL

Treasurer: DANIEL MEBANE

E. G. WOOD, *Advertising Manager*
BYRON DEXTER, *Circulation Manager*

SINGLE COPIES, FIFTEEN CENTS; YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, FIVE DOLLARS; CANADIAN SUBSCRIPTIONS SIX DOLLARS, FOREIGN, SIX DOLLARS; THREE MONTHS' TRIAL, ONE DOLLAR

EDITED AND PRODUCED UNDER UNION CONDITIONS BY CONTRACT WITH THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE GUILD, LOCAL 18, UOPWA, CIO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Cost Plus" Again

A THIRD FEDERAL emergency-tax increase following the two revenue acts of 1940, Chairman Doughton of the House Ways and Means Committee predicts, will occasion a deeper thrust into the pocket of the nation to defray the mounting cost of national defense. Is this to be expected? Does the cost mount quite as it should?

A cry was raised last June by Senator Walsh, chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee, about a billion dollars of cost-plus-10-percent contracts. His committee had stumbled on the disclosure that the Navy Department prepared this billion in shipbuilding contracts on the same basis that occasioned scandals during the World War. Whereat the Committee straightway changed the naval-expansion bill, in reporting it to the Senate, by adding to the House draft a limitation of 7 and 8-percent profit to replace the then current limitation of 10 percent on ships and 12 percent on airplanes. Congress never intended, Senator Walsh protested, to guarantee profits of 10 percent; this figure, he said, had been written into law as an absolute ceiling.

As amended, the Vinson-Trammell law was passed. But in July, apparently under pressure of interests with stakes in the additional billions of defense contracts, the administration yielded to proposals to rescind the act, and Congress did so, responding to the President's request to exact a "steeply graduated" excess-profits tax.

It sounded all right. But already it is uneasily felt that an excess-profits tax represents, at best, an effort to recapture a horse which has bolted through the open stable door. Helped by an increase in the flat corporation-tax rate from 20.9 to 24 percent, the excess-profits levy is expected by the Treasury to yield not more than $260,000,000, while about $4,500,000,000 is being paid out in defense contracts.

No doubt in fiscal 1942, and onward, the excess-profits taxes will net higher revenues. But will they prevent the making of war millionaires, which it is the administration's avowed purpose to prevent?

The yet more steeply graduated 1918 taxes, war profits and excess-profits combined, failed to blight their blossoming. It may be doubted whether imposition of 100 percent on excess profits, such as Britain exacts, would effectually nip the budding of fresh millionaires upon the more than $10,000,000,000 of American defense contracts already let.

The doubt grows when it is realized that costs are the important thing. But costs are wrapped in mystery, while Senator Walsh and his colleagues, the Congress and the President have permitted their attention to be diverted to the mere cents-percent. Costs were the sieve through which the millions were slipped, in 1917-19, by flag-draped contractors cashing in on American participation "over there."

In those days, as now, every big contractor had his own costing system. Even before America had actually entered the War the contractor upped his capital valuations of plant and equipment and material, his accounting of stock issues and bonded obligations, interest and depreciation charges, salaries of officials, and padded his payrolls in anticipation of cost-plus contracts. It should be borne in mind that such higher charges to cost account were only super-added to the firmly established custom whereby the entrepreneur wrongfully builds a price structure, not only out of operating and material costs, but out of the overhead expense of keeping large percentages of his plants chronically idle, awaiting orders. But when the urgency of national defense brings orders that fill out the margin of this scandalously idle and overpriced peacetime capacity, the contractor proceeds to make the prices that have included idleness expense, and have long limited production and service, the minimal basis for figuring war prices on even more "costs" that fail to enter into the goods Uncle Sam is to pay for.

"Cost plus 10 percent" became, in 1917, the watchword of patriotic speeches expatiating on the need of incentives to manufacturers to do more business. If any niggardly limitation below this figure were to be put on war contracts, the orators held, it would tend to make the contractors "less eager" to coöperate in necessary production. Meanwhile, millions of doughboys were being trained and shipped to France to lay down their lives at a dollar a day.

Of course, every large-scale manufacturer knows that 10 percent, or 7 percent, or 5 percent, or even less profit on turnover of sales, in volume to draw on the full capacity of his plant and at costs strictly limited to those that produce the war goods, should sate even those animals that customarily plant their forefeet in the trough. Nevertheless, up to this day of crisis produced by a Teuton war economy that is thriftily budgeted by Herr Hitler, grand divisions of American production, notably the raw-material and other basic industries, have maintained, during peace, their cost-and-price structures at a sublime sacrifice of volume. Now, as world revolution threatens, the rigid American price structures stand and rise toward the zenith as the economies of full-time production tend to bring costs to a nadir.

The bill of idleness is a big one, often approaching operating costs. Ernest T. Weir, president of the American Iron and Steel Institute, estimates that two tons of capacity in steel, for the five years prior to 1940, had been bidding for every one ton demanded;

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

while in steel construction, during that period, the capacity-demand ratio had been four-to-one. Steel capacity had been steadily growing for decades, Mr. Weir declares; meanwhile volume had ranged as low as 19.5 percent in 1932. The remedy, he holds, is "a very simple one: It means only that you must charge a price, under any given condition, which covers all of your costs—including the cost of carrying unused capacity—and returns a reasonable profit." Of course, this rule has worked to restrict volume, to make the 50 percent of idleness chronic. Now, with this huge idleness expense erased by war and defense orders, the monstrous structure of prices is maintained and even heightened.

The question should be grappled with now. In the light of experience it should be settled justly. Congress is sitting during the European developments. Its committees, acting jointly with the procurement agencies of the army and navy, can apply, initially, the right controlling principle.

For in every shop and industry runs a chain of planned production. It includes forecasts of volume projected against standards, coördination of output, sales and storage to assure a free flow of work, check-up of performance with program, executive timing of measures to control budget and inventory. Through all this should run the blue thread of principle, that of separating from costs the expense hitherto occasioned by idleness, both of men and equipment.

Wallace Clark, to single out a typical management costing expert, has drawn this blue thread in a definition that flashes through the continuity of shop planning. To big business and to small business alike, Mr. Clark says, the cost of an article "is made up only of those expenses actually incurred in the production of that article." He goes on to say:

> For instance, the cost of owning a building and the land on which it stands is part of the cost of goods manufactured in that building. However, the cost of owning the vacant lot across the street, which is not used for anything, is not a part of the cost of manufacturing, even if the land is owned by the same company. It is an investment to provide for future growth—a sinking fund paid out of profits and not a part of the cost of the goods produced.
>
> Only buildings and land that are used, and then only during the actual time they are used, should be included in costs of manufacture.

That is not all. In the same way, Mr. Clark maintains, the cost of an article must include the cost of owning and housing an active machine on which it is manufactured. But it should not include the cost of that machine when it is not running, or of owning a machine a few feet away which has been idle and has not in any way influenced the manufacture of that article.

To entrepreneurs accustomed to other methods of accounting this is a hard saying. "How can we run our business," we hear them ask, "if we don't count in all our expenses and get them back, somehow, in price?"

Right enough, all costs and expenses should be accounted. But must value be gotten back for expenses of idleness that do not produce the goods the buyer pays for? Reckon up such expenses by all means, the buyer concedes, but only to avoid them in future; and do not make the prices that have included idle time the basis for prices of full-time production. For it is plain as a pikestaff that when a factory has been turning out only half the output of which it was capable, that output should bear, not the whole expense of rent, insurance, taxes and supervision of the entire plant, but only half. The other half rightfully goes where enlightened heads do not hesitate to put it, namely, to profit-and-loss account. Summing up, Mr. Clark says:

> The cost of output should not be made to bear the total expense of the plant, but only that portion of the expense needed to produce the goods. This was a new rule twenty-five years ago, as formulated by the late H. L. Gantt. It is no longer new. In many leading industries, both in Europe and in the United States, it has become established practice.

I have quoted Mr. Clark at some length because of his extensive experience. His first job was with the Remington Typewriter Company in 1912, when he became associated with Gantt in reorganizing the methods of that company. He was placed in charge of the scheduling division of the United States Shipping Board during the World War, in planning the movement of all ships owned or chartered by that body. After the Armistice, Mr. Clark engaged in installing management methods in industries in the United States. His work, notably with European governments and private industries since 1926, has won him the Gantt Medal bestowed by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the American Management Association, "in recognition of distinguished services in the development and promotion of management."

At the outset of our preparation against the principalities and powers that are imposing their will on the world, idleness expense as a factor of cost and price has breached the income and reserve strength of the nation. By separating it from the accounting of industrial costs, the whole community would gain a scientific basis for the pricing downward that induces volume orders. This would do away with the idle overhead. It would also add economies of operation, yield a larger and more consistent profit on capital and lift the nation's income. By reviving the purchasing power of the population, its ability to support the government in its outlays for defense, it would do more than any other single measure to restore internal order and vitality.

Assuming that the influence of idle time has been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

removed, the principal argument for adequate cost-finding techniques is as an aid to managerial competence. But in the execution of cost-plus contracts, standardized costing practices also afford the best safeguards against such irregularities as accompanied the building of the cantonments in 1917. Routines measuring such items as machine time, goods and wages properly chargeable to a piece of contract work can and must be regularized under government fiat as definitely as are much more intricate procedures in accounting insisted upon in income-tax reporting.

Already, in the President's Advisory Commission on Defense, Leon Henderson is organizing his program for bringing the raw-materials industries into a movement for stable prices. Mr. Henderson might well include in his studies the range of prices charged by industries that have been most addicted to unemployment, as compared with the price-index kept by the Labor Department at Washington. He might add estimates of the percentage of idleness expense which these industries have customarily reckoned into their prices. Such studies could be put to immediate practical use by the procurement heads of national defense, if and when they become committed to the principle of not paying for any value that has not been put into the products and services they buy. HERBERT BRUCE BROUGHAM

Who Aids the Refugee?

IN SOUTHERN FRANCE today huddle seven million refugees. Most of them eventually will go home, whether to conquered lands or free. For others there remain only two hopes—that civilized peace comes before starvation or reprisal, or that they can get away. These are the Jews, for whom there is little room in Hitler's Europe; the interned Spaniards who have Franco to go home to; and those who elsewhere distinguished themselves as enemies of fascism, and for whom there is only the Gestapo. For them unoccupied France is a temporary, hungry, uncertain haven separated from the full scorn of the Nazis by a shadowy line which at any moment may break down completely. They, together with the politically persecuted who have already come to the Americas, are the refugees with whom the United States is mainly concerned. Historically, emotionally, frequently by ties of blood, we are their friends.

But what are we doing for them—and how?

For the alleviation of the great mass of the conquered peoples of Europe, relatively little is being done by Americans. The Red Cross has withdrawn from German-occupied territory, and in unoccupied France it is ladling out the tail-end of its small supplies. The Friends are working industriously and compassionately in southern France, but with severely limited funds; their report to the State Department indicates that in fourteen recent months they sent about ninety thousand dollars directly to belligerent countries for reportable relief. Special groups are being helped by other Americans. But the problem is too large for anything but official or semi-official governmental action—something like the wholesale feeding which Herbert Hoover proposes for the American Red Cross. It is almost certain that nothing will come of this—or that at most some refugee children will be cared for.

Any American can testify, however, that there are plenty of agencies willing to accept his foreign-relief dollar. The State Department on December 7 reported nearly three hundred organizations which, during fourteen months, sent funds to belligerent countries. The problem is to distinguish what they are, and to discover how much duplication and overlapping there is among them.

Three principal types of aid are offered—relief in Europe; help in evacuation; and help in the country of asylum. But since some organizations work in more than one of these fields, it is easier to group them according to the types of refugee they serve.

The Jew.—The Jewish organizations, some of which have had long experience in helping the refugee, have been occupied with the Hitlerian migrations since 1933.

Their problem is great: 442,000 Jews have left greater Germany in the last seven years, about 148,000 of them in 1939; of the 68,000 who fled from old Germany last year, 44 percent required financial assistance from welfare agencies. Some have had to move several times. Dr. Manfred George, for instance, editor of the New York refugee weekly Aufbau, managed to keep always one jump ahead of Der Führer by fleeing from Germany to Czecho-Slovakia, to France, to America.

Largest of the Jewish agencies and, excluding the Red Cross, largest of all American refugee agencies—is the American-Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. The JDC is giving relief in Germany and her captive states (by a very ingenious arrangement, it does so without sending in food or money: the JDC uses dollars to buy steamship tickets; prospective emigrants pay for these with local currency, and this money buys food on the spot). But its principal job is in southern France among the 55,000 alien Jews who are forbidden to hold jobs, engage in business or send their children to school, and of whom 15,000 to 30,000—the very uncertainty about the number is indicative of their plight—are in concentration camps. Vichy has drawn the strings on all Jews; for the aliens among them unoccupied France is respite but not refuge.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The first job of the JDC is to keep these people alive. There is no hope of a mass migration of 55,000—the funds, the ships and the places of hospice are not available. This does not mean that evacuation has ceased. Except for Polish and Czech males of military age, all may now leave France, and as soon as visas are available they can cross Spain to Lisbon and there await passage.

The United States immigration laws, intended to outlaw importation of contract labor, prohibit organizations from paying transportation costs of immigrants. But the JDC frequently buys steamship tickets to countries having no such restrictions. In coöperation with other Jewish groups it has helped get 100,000 Jews to Latin America, 20,000 to Shanghai, 100,000 refugees—some 150,000 others went voluntarily—to Palestine, and between 100,000 and 110,000 to the United States.

The National Refugee Service tackles another end of the problem—that of helping the refugee make his way in the United States. Its approach is that of the modern social worker, the antithesis of the whole ancient technique of herding immigrants from pier to food and lodging, and sending them out on New York streets next morning with an armful of neckties. Of the four hundred NRS employees, nearly half are social workers or have other training for special tasks.

The heart of the NRS program is its resettlement work. Director William Haber, former Michigan relief administrator and now on leave from a University of Michigan economics professorship, constantly stresses the greater opportunities for employment and assimilation in the smaller cities and towns. With the help of seven hundred local committees, the NRS resettled 3,500 persons in smaller communities in 1939, and another 5,500 in 1940, and it is collecting an impressive file of thank-you letters from enthusiastic and grateful refugees.

The Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society has been helping immigrants for fifty-five years, and worked with refugees as long ago as the Tsarist pogroms and the post-war migrations. HIAS in 1939 spent $143,000 of its half-million-dollar budget for overseas activity. To immigrants in the United States during the first ten months of 1940 it provided 63,025 nights of shelter and 251,816 meals. During the same time its employment office helped 1,200 persons get jobs.

The Refugee Economic Corporation was set up with initial funds of a million and a half to promote resettlement projects, including those in the Philippines, Australia, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic. The last, now supervised by the Dominican Republic Settlement Association, has provided homes for a hundred refugee farmers. Four hundred more families are expected shortly. Sponsors are particularly hopeful about this project. It has proved, they say, that European refugees can work in the open in the subtropical climate and keep physical health.

The Anti-Fascists.—They include 150,000 Spanish Republicans remaining in southern France, as well as Germans, Italians, Frenchmen and others who because of their known anti-fascist sympathies or activities can easily be singled out for reprisals.

The Friends, sometimes with help from the Spanish aid societies, give such relief as they can, but even among refugees the position of the Loyalists is an unenviable one. They are among three governments which hate them; upon a fourth, which at best is unsympathetic, they are dependent for their very existence.

A spectacular proposal, and one that has raised more controversy than enthusiasm, is that of the American Rescue Ship Mission. The present plan is to buy a ship, for the down payment on which it was announced that three hundred thousand dollars would be raised. Critics admit that the plan has imagination, drive and good purpose. But they doubt that it will be as easy as the sponsors think to arrange for embarkation from Marseilles. Rescue Ship Mission officials estimate that transportation will cost about two hundred dollars a head, which for large-scale evacuation would involve—as these things go—almost astronomical sums.

The New World Resettlement Fund has a contract to resettle five thousand Spanish Republican families in Ecuador over a five-year period. As soon as visas are granted to Spanish refugees now in Mexico, the first expedition of ten or fifteen families will open the project. The main group would of course come from French concentration camps.

Just now the Resettlement Fund is united with the International Relief Association in a Joint Campaign for Political Refugees. John Dos Passos stated in The New Republic recently that "all money raised will be immediately applied to getting refugees out of Europe by whatever means proves feasible in each particular instance."

The United States government has refused to consider the Spanish Loyalists as refugees and thereby denies them even temporary haven in this country. Other anti-fascists who cannot enter under the quota may sometimes obtain an emergency visa from the State Department through the intercession of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees. PM and others have charged that it is a good deal easier to get an emergency visa for titled and monied Europeans of almost any political persuasion than for the people who have been in the forefront in fighting Hitler and all he stands for.

Some visas have none the less gone to real anti-fascists. The Emergency Rescue Committee has so far helped obtain a hundred emergency visas for intellectuals, among them Konrad Heiden, Franz Werfel, Dr. Alfred Deblein, Leonard Frank and Hermann Kesten. This body, which coöperates with the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign and the American Friends

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of German Freedom, up to December 1 had spent more than fifty thousand dollars for refugees, some of it for a relief camp for anti-fascists at Marseilles.

The Exiled Writers' Committee has helped a number of authors to this continent. The American Committee to Save Refugees is devoted to helping Spaniards, both with aid in France and in making possible their evacuation.

Others. – Among the organizations aiding refugees, but not pointed particularly at Jews or anti-fascists, must of course be included the American Red Cross, which even when it is not giving direct aid can help in finding missing persons, and the American Friends' Service Committee, whose humanitarian spirit has won universal praise from those who are closest to the refugee problem. Among domestic refugee activities of the Friends are the Scattergood Hostel in West Branch, Iowa, and a similar refuge at Quaker Hill, Indiana.

The Committee for Catholic Refugees, set up by the United States hierarchy to help Aryan and Jewish Catholics, reports that among its cases are those of 237 emigrés. Its monthly budget is $9,000.

The American Committee for Christian Refugees helps with immigration advice, and with resettlement guidance in the United States, those who do not come under Jewish or Catholic jurisdiction. It also provides such relief in Lisbon and elsewhere as its $250,000 budget permits. New cases are coming at the rate of 170 a month.

Some of the Jewish committees are working in Eastern Europe, but perhaps most prominent in this area is the Commission for Polish Relief. It has spent nearly a million dollars to feed some fifty thousand Polish children in Poland, Rumania and Vilna, and to aid twenty thousand stranded Poles in unoccupied France.

The Queen Wilhelmina Fund is still aiding some Netherlanders in Portugal, England and France. It has collected about four hundred thousand dollars, of which about half has so far been spent in Europe.

This does not fully call the roll of American organizations in aid of the European refugee. Neither does the appended list do that. There are Belgian, Finnish and Norwegian relief funds, but these were intended more to aid embattled peoples than to give succor to the refugee, and they are now relatively inactive. The coat-and-suit industry, through a label tax, has given three hundred thousand dollars to refugee organizations, and is raising a hundred and fifty thousand more. The Zionists, B'nai B'rith, numerous churches, the National Federation of Settlements, the Musicians' Emergency Fund and other groups have at various times been helpful to refugees. So has the refugee been helpful to himself.

The newspaper Aufbau is an interesting illustration of this. When Mr. George, at the end of his previously mentioned travels, took over the Aufbau a couple of years ago, it had a circulation of a few hundreds among members of the German-Jewish Club. Now, with the help of a staff of refugee amateurs and contributions from many famous exiled writers, Mr. George puts out an exciting and prosperous-looking tabloid for 19,000 subscribers.

The Aufbau supports an employment agency which places about 150 refugees a month, a physicians' training group and a comprehensive sports program. These are supported by the newspaper's profits. To give direct aid to the needy, Aufbau has organized a blue-card club similar to that used by the Nazis. The members, in this case refugees who already have jobs, make contributions by a system of self-taxation. The amounts raised are not large, but they are indicative of the spirit in which most of these people are seeking to help themselves and to take on community responsibility. Dr. George, editor of the Berlin Tempo, couldn't possibly have put so much happy gusto into his work as does plain Manfred George ("titles unless they mean something are un-American"), editor of the Aufbau.

It will be seen that in many cases, particularly among organizations serving anti-fascists, various bodies aim at approximately the same groups. In actual practice there is little duplication; there is work enough for all of them, and except for some natural competition in fund raising, their mutual relations are characterized more by a spirit of coöperation than of rivalry.

ALBERT HORLINGS

Some principal American refugee-aid organizations:

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR CHRISTIAN REFUGEES, 287 Fourth Avenue, New York, ST 9-4580. Helps Protestant Germans and others with visas; resettlement work in the United States; some direct relief.

AMERICAN COMMITTEE TO SAVE REFUGEES, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, CH 2-6245. Through intercession with authorities, seeks to protect interned anti-fascists in France.

AMERICAN FRIENDS' SERVICE COMMITTEE, 20 South Twelfth Street, Philadelphia. Main effort now is in feeding refugee women and children in unoccupied France; caring for Spanish refugee children.

AMERICAN-JEWISH JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE, 100 East Forty-second Street, New York, LE 2-5200. Refugee aid abroad and in countries of refuge other than the United States; helps in evacuation; served an estimated 1,000,000 persons in 1940.

AUFBAU, 15 East Fortieth Street, New York, MU 4-0192. This German refugee weekly runs lost-persons department; employment office, sports program, physicians' retraining and other services.

CENTRAL BUREAU FOR RELIEF OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHES OF EUROPE, Geneva; American offices, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York, GR 5-3475. Now doing direct relief in Europe; members of Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America contribute.

COMMISSION FOR POLISH RELIEF, 420 Lexington Avenue, New York, MU 3-3700. Feeding Polish children in Eastern Europe.

COMMITTEE FOR CATHOLIC REFUGEES FROM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GERMANY, 265 West Fourteenth Street, New York, CH 2-1230. Aids in evacuating and, through affiliated groups, in resettling Catholic refugees.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SETTLEMENT ASSOCIATION, 165 Broadway, New York, WO 2-2558. Supervises refugee-resettlement project in Dominican Republic, which may provide 1,000 subsistence and cash-crop farms.

EMERGENCY COMMITTEE IN AID OF DISPLACED FOREIGN SCHOLARS, 2 West Forty-fifth Street, New York, VA 6-1471. Has obtained grants for 232 foreign scholars in seven and one-half years.

EMERGENCY RESCUE COMMITTEE, 122 East Forty-second Street, New York, MU 3-4590. Aids anti-Nazi refugees both with relief in Europe and with evacuation to America.

EUROPE YWCA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE, 600 Lexington Avenue, New York, PL 3-4700. Social work at two work centers for refugees in Toulouse, France; social work elsewhere in Europe and in China.

EXILED WRITERS' COMMITTEE, 381 Fourth Avenue, MU 6-8790. This affiliate of the League of American Writers seeks to protect refugee writers from Nazi persecution; no direct relief.

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE FOR REFUGEES, 1010 Park Avenue, New York, BU 8-8065. Non-sectarian cultural center, library and club for refugees. Begun in May, 1940; attendance now 1,100 a week.

GERMAN-JEWISH CHILDREN'S AID, 165 West Forty-sixth Street, New York, BR 9-2102. Through a special agreement with the United States government, has placed refugee children in American homes until they are self-supporting.

GOOD NEIGHBOR COMMITTEE, 2 West Sixty-fourth Street, New York, TR 4-4267. Language classes and consultative service in New York.

HEBREW SHELTERING AND IMMIGRANT AID SOCIETY, 425 Lafayette Street, New York, AL 4-2900. Meets incoming refugees, provides shelter and other aid. European offices give help with documents and evacuation.

HOSPITES, 130 East Twenty-second Street, New York, GR 5-7060. This American Social Workers' Hospitality Group helps a small number of trained social workers both in Europe and the United States with direct relief and in other ways.

INTERCOLLEGIATE COMMITTEE TO AID STUDENT REFUGEES, 8 West Fortieth Street, New York, LO 5-5935. Has helped obtain about 290 tuition and other scholarships for student refugees in three years.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION SERVICE, 122 East Twenty-second Street, New York, GR 5-6881. Through international headquarters in Geneva and offices in European capitals, does "international case work by correspondence" relating to refugees as well as others.

INTERNATIONAL RELIEF ASSOCIATION, 2 West Forty-third Street, New York, LO 5-4229. Direct relief to political refugees abroad; has helped evacuate seventeen or eighteen; some seventy others with visas awaiting exit documents and transportation.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICE, 8 West Fortieth Street, New York, LO 5-5935 (International office in Geneva). The American branch in the last two years has placed nearly three hundred refugee students in American universities under scholarships provided by the schools and others.

JEWISH AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY, 301 East Fourteenth Street, New York, AL 4-1666. Long engaged in interesting Jews in farming, but is doing special work with refugees; about 220 families of the latter placed on farms in Eastern United States; helps them with training farm in New Jersey, with extension service, and sometimes with loans.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN, 1819 Broadway, New York, CI 6-3175. Through its many local councils, helps in resettlement work; emphasizes continuing help in adjustment and Americanization.

NATIONAL REFUGEE SERVICE, 165 West Forty-sixth Street, New York, BR 9-2102. Aids refugees in the United States. Non-sectarian consultative and social services; cash relief to Jewish refugees.

NEW WORLD RESETTLEMENT FUND, 2 West Forty-third Street, New York, LO 5-4229. Sponsors an agricultural colony in Ecuador for Spanish Republican refugees.

PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL REFUGEES, 122 East Twenty-second Street, New York, GR 5-1093. Acts as liaison group between the government and private refugee organizations; studies wider aspects of refugee problem.

QUEEN WILHELMINA FUND, 10 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, CI 5-6383. Has helped some Dutch refugees in England, France and Portugal.

REFUGEE ECONOMIC CORPORATION, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York, PL 3-2651. Prepares financial base for resettlement projects in South America, Philippines, Australia and elsewhere.

SALVATION ARMY, 120 West Fourteenth Street, New York, CH 3-8700. Gives refugee aid through its established organizations and institutions in Europe.

SPANISH REFUGEE RELIEF CAMPAIGN, 342 Madison Avenue, New York, VA 6-2877. Helping Spanish refugees resettle in Mexico; provides emergency aid to Spanish children and wounded in Southern France through American Friends' Service Committee.

UNITARIAN SERVICE COMMITTEE, 25 Beacon Street, Boston. Does social-service work among European refugees, helps with visas, etc.; particularly concerned with Czechs.

UNITED AMERICAN-SPANISH AID COMMITTEE, 200 Fifth Avenue, New York, GR 5-7607. Sponsor of the American Rescue Ship Mission.

UNITED STATES COMMITTEE FOR THE CARE OF EUROPEAN CHILDREN, 215 Fourth Avenue, New York, AL 4-5162. Non-sectarian group organized to help evacuate children from war zone and place them in American homes.

Burden

Whoever lives beside a mountain knows,
Although he dares not speak it out, that he
Must always carry on his heart the snows
That burden down the trees. And never the sea
Will rush around him cool, like snow-cool air,
And carry him and lift him like a leaf.
He will not find this lightness anywhere
Since mountains brood; they hold dark league
with grief.

The pine trees never tire of moving down
The slopes to meet him, pointing up from town
Beyond the tree-line to the rigid peaks.
The mountain holds him though it never speaks.
He scrambles over boulders on his knees
Trying to reach the summit, like the trees.

RICHARD EBERHART

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Men Who Make the Future

III. *How Science Corrects Our Mistakes*

This is the third of a series of articles based on interviews with a number of the leading research experts in the physical sciences in the United States. Under the pledge that they would not be quoted by name, these men—Nobel Prize-winners, heads of departments in great universities, directors of research for big industrial corporations—talked freely with Mr. Bliven about their general philosophy, the broad tendency of their thought.—THE EDITORS

I HAVE JUST HAD a most exciting experience. Through interviews with a group of the chief scientists of the country, I have been given a picture of the amazing work that is now being done to rectify the errors in living that man, in his ignorance, has inflicted upon himself. At present, and for a long time to come, this task will be one of the two great objectives of scientific work, the other being to apply new knowledge and make possible greater achievements than have ever been known in the past.

At first glance, it may seem absurd that the scientists should have to spend so much time and energy trying to rectify the mistakes arising from lack of information; yet this is true. We have learned more about the functioning of the human body in recent years than in all our previous history. It is a marvelous mechanism, beautifully adapted for a long, active and successful life; but this life should be lived under conditions thoroughly dissimilar from those experienced by the typical city-dweller of today. The scientists now realize that human beings are adapted to spend nearly all their time in the open air, engaging daily in a large amount of muscular activity. They should eat much of their food not "processed" in any way that interferes with the precious vitamins and minerals. They should be exposed a good part of the time to the ultra-violet rays of the sun. They should not live under any pressure of haste or the sense of passing time, or worry about their future except from day to day. They should not be required by the restraints of civilization to smother their most profound impulses and conceal their strongest feelings. (This does not mean, of course, that they should give full vent to their wishes if these are of an anti-social character.)

Instead of living as nature intended, what have we done to ourselves? Many of us hardly go out of doors at all for any length of time except perhaps for a few weeks' vacation in summer. The rest of the year we stay in houses twenty-two or twenty-three hours out of the day and when we do go out, 80 percent of the skin area is covered with clothing that cuts off the ultra-violet rays and prevents them from coöperating in the manufacture of Vitamin D in our systems. We exercise each day certainly not more than five or ten percent as much as we are biologically intended to do.

Most amazing of all, we have unwittingly fallen into the habit of eating foods many of which are now lacking in some of the elements absolutely necessary for the maintenance of health and vigor. Wheat, for instance, is a wonderful form of nourishment; but because whole-wheat flour, which includes the germ, does not keep very well (and also for reasons of flavor or even of fashion), we have gone over to white flour, from which some of the precious vitamins and minerals have been extracted by the miller. Another wonderful food is rice, but the most valuable part of it is the brown outer wrapping. With what seems like a suicidal instinct, mankind evinces a preference for "polished rice," from which the best part has been removed; an exclusive diet of polished rice will speedily produce the serious disease, beriberi. Many other foods are given treatment commercially that destroys or removes a great part of their real value.

Moreover, we eat too much of certain substances and not enough of others, one important reason of course being poverty. In the United States we have heard a great deal in recent years about surpluses of various sorts of food; but in fact, to keep our whole nation as healthy as it ought to be and can be, we need all that we have, and more, of nearly every food. For full health, we should eat at least 60 percent more vegetables and fruits than we do, 50 percent more butter, milk and eggs, even 10 percent more meat. And of course they should be eaten in forms from which the precious vitamins have not been extracted.

An event of historic importance not long ago passed almost unnoticed in the American press. The British government ordered calcium and Vitamin B_1 to be added to all the white bread baked in England henceforth. The British authorities knew that in their country, as in the United States, diets accepted as normal by most people are inadequate from the standpoint of nutrition.

When your dog gnaws a bone from which all the meat has already departed, he is not merely exercising his jaws, as was formerly supposed. The action liberates small quantities of calcium, highly beneficial to his system. A human infant of two or three years, given a bone, will instinctively gnaw it in the same way and for the same reason. Because this looks like "bad manners," his parents, whose half-knowledge serves them less well than the instinct of the child or animal, will pre-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vent the baby's doing something that is emphatically to his benefit.

In China, for hundreds of years the traditional gift to the young mother who had just had a baby has been pigs' feet pickled in vinegar, and no research laboratory of today could devise a better one. Soaking the pigs' feet in vinegar releases some of the calcium in the bones to replace that given by the mother to her baby before birth.

Savages in the African forest, seeking essential foodstuffs, including calcium, eat many sorts of green leaves from shrubs and trees. When the leaves are too coarse and unpalatable, they sometimes actually burn them and eat the ashes. If you want something to think about on a rainy afternoon, ask yourself how the savages ever discovered that the calcium in green vegetation survived burning and is good for them. Within the last few months we have learned that grass is amazingly rich in vitamins, richer by far than some of the green vegetables that have heretofore been our main source of supply.

Said a man who is one of the two or three outstanding authorities on nutrition and diet in the United States: "A simple rule of thumb for a healthful diet is this: Spend half your food money for milk, fruits and vegetables. Eat half your breadstuffs and cereals in the form of whole-grain products."

The men who know most about diet are convinced that if we ate the things nature intended, in the proper quantities, and also followed a natural regimen in general, abounding, vigorous health would be far more common than it is at present. Some of them hold the opinion that in this case, present notions about the normal length of life could be revised upward by 10 percent or more. It has been suggested that throughout the animal world, total life is about nine times the length of childhood; if this were a reliable guide, the human span should be from one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five years.

In what other ways has civilization tended to harm us? One of them, as suggested, is in causing us to spend such a large proportion of our time indoors. Knowledge of the value of sunlight to human beings is one of the recent major advances of science. For several decades it has been recognized that exposure to the sun is valuable for sufferers from tuberculosis; but until lately, little attention was paid to its desirability for the whole population. Today we know that sunlight acting directly on the skin helps to create the all-essential Vitamin D. It is also a germicide. What other services it performs, we can only guess in the present imperfect state of our knowledge. To be sure, the use of sunlight should be judicious; a little every day is far better than a great deal all at once and then none at all for a considerable period of time. Sunburn is not an evidence of health but of indiscretion.

We have not known very long that ordinary window-glass cuts out the ultra-violet rays, which are the most important therapeutic agent in sunshine. As soon as this fact became clear, the glass industry set to work to find new types through which ultra-violet could pass. At first, this glass was expensive and tended to discolor and deteriorate after being used a short time. Today new and inexpensive types of glass are being developed and it is hoped that soon we may be able to solve the problem created when humankind came indoors.

In the meantime, scientists have developed sun-ray lamps which will supply the necessary ultra-violet rays under those conditions where access to genuine sunshine is limited or unavailable. In England, for example, some of the more advanced coal-mining companies provide such lamps for their miners who are cut off by their work from sunshine except on their holidays, and even then have to take their chances with the vagaries of the English climate.

Are the strains of our civilization putting a too heavy burden on the human animal? Is the race degenerating under the conditions of modern urban life? To the second of these questions, at least, the scientists return a comforting No. They point out that the overwhelming testimony of experience is that acquired characteristics which do not affect the pattern of the chromosomes are not transmitted from parent to child. Ten generations may live in the dark and airless slums with inadequate food and clothing, and a child in the eleventh generation, if he is brought up properly from birth, will be almost as fine a physical specimen as though he were the son of ten successive generations of earls. (He is handicapped a little before birth if his mother's bloodstream has been impoverished by the conditions of her life.) To me this seems very nearly the most hopeful fact in the whole picture of man's life on earth.

Have the strains of modern living actually harmed the individual, beyond the damage that we do to ourselves by wrong food and wrong living habits? This is a matter of dispute. The death rate from certain diseases seems to be increasing, which may be the result of any one of several things. It is partly a matter of more accurate medical statistics. It is partly because certain great plagues that formerly took a heavy toll—smallpox for instance—have been removed from their place at the head of the list, so that others come forward. We live longer than we used to, so that the diseases characteristic of elderly people play a greater role. Devitalized foods and other undesirable conditions of the past few decades have more serious effects than most people realize, since the present scientific knowledge of proper diet and other health measures is by no means reflected in the habits of the entire population.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On the whole, scientists are reluctant to admit that a man driving an automobile in heavy traffic, or a stockbroker answering seven telephones at once, is pushing his nervous system beyond the breaking point. Most of the experts feel that the human mechanism is capable of surviving far greater strains than is commonly supposed. They point to the physicians of a hundred years ago who learnedly announced that men would suffer grave injury if they tried to travel by the newfangled steam railways faster than twenty or thirty miles an hour. It is quite likely, they say, that fifty years hence men may look back upon the tranquil leisure of the 1940's as we look back upon the middle of the nineteenth century before the telephone, the internal-combustion engine, the radio loudspeaker and the animated electric sign had wrought their present presumed havoc.

At the risk of making another mistake like that of the scientists of 1840, our present-day physiologists assert that they believe they now know the top limit of airplane speed unless special conditions are created. They think it is in the neighborhood of 600 miles an hour. Let me recklessly predict that ordinary commercial airplanes are not likely to travel faster than about 400 miles an hour, or roughly double their present rate, at least until new devices have been perfected for the comfort and safety of their passengers. (Military airplanes, of course, already use speeds of about four hundred miles an hour.) The harmful effect of high speed on the human organism comes when the vehicle goes around a corner. Traveling in a straight line, however fast, does not seem to be injurious.

Is the strain of modern life causing an increase in insanity? The scientists are not sure. The number of persons incarcerated in mental hospitals has gone up markedly, but there may be special reasons for this. We recognize the insanities more readily than before, and people are now more willing to accept hospitalization for themselves or members of their family. If there is an increase in the actual prevalence of insanity, it is partly offset by the remarkable new cures that are being made through insulin shock and other treatments. Moreover, many persons who would have been considered insane a few decades ago are now recognized as the victims of glandular deficiency of one sort or another and can be partly or entirely cured by administering additional supplies of the inadequate internal secretions. We are only on the shores of a vast sea of knowledge here. Psychiatry is generations younger than most of the other sciences; it is developing with great rapidity, and its next ten or twenty years are likely to be of tremendous importance to man's knowledge of himself.

One of the most exciting chapters of science today is the work that is being done on the relation between mental states and physical conditions. This is a complicated subject to which I shall return later in this series; meanwhile, let me report the fact that medical science is increasingly reluctant to draw a hard and fast line between illnesses of the mind and those of the body. Undoubtedly each influences the other in more subtle and baffling ways than doctors dreamed of a few decades ago. Some of these ways definitely result from the conditions of civilized life. We know today that some emotional states, such as fear or anger, momentarily produce marked physical changes in our bodies. They call forth, for example, increased activity by certain glands of internal secretion, to aid in the physical effort of fighting or running away. But modern civilized man oftentimes experiences these emotions without doing either of these things, and the extra secretions are not put to their normal use. Science is beginning to believe that they thereupon damage the human organism in surprising and seemingly quite unrelated ways.

An interesting and long continued dispute has been in progress as to the biological effects of war. Some experts believe that before the invention of gunpowder, it was the strongest and best warriors who survived in battle to return home and become the fathers of the next generation. But all men are equal before the trigger; and it is argued that since modern weapons were invented, soldiers have been killed off without reference to their individual courage or vigor. Other scientists take an opposite view. They say that since the coming of gunpowder, it has been possible to use as soldiers men who are physically and morally inferior to those of an earlier day, and that eugenically the result has by no means been bad. They point also to the fact that in the days when men fought hand to hand it was often the custom to kill every member of a defeated army, so that the strength and intelligence of the individual did not enable him to survive unless he was on the winning side. At any rate, the experts believe that the human being today is about the same as he has been for the past few thousand years. A long and exhausting war may drag down the level of the population for a generation or two, but mankind shows a wonderful power of recuperation. Certainly there's no evidence that the human stock has degenerated, as might have been expected in view of the almost continuous wars of modern times.

Within the past century, we have seen another remarkable development. The advance of medical science has changed "the survival of the fittest" into something fairly close to "the survival of everybody, whether fit or not." But the scientists whom I consulted do not accept the idea now current in Germany, for example, that the state should assume the responsibility of preventing inferior individuals from having children, though it is recognized that the actual practice of sterilization in the Third Reich is carefully controlled. The arguments against the general theory are several.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the first place, the experts point out that some person or some group has to set up the standard as to who is superior and inferior. But this necessitates a subjective judgment. I might say that people like myself are desirable citizens and that people like you are inferior; you might reply that the opposite is true. Second, the qualities which made for survival in primitive man, those of physical strength, bravery and initiative, may not be the most desirable ones a hundred years from now, or even at this moment. What use is physical strength, for instance, in a civilization which consists mostly of pressing buttons or moving levers and letting mechanical slaves as powerful as Aladdin's djinn do your work for you? Extreme egoism and adventurousness, which are good qualities in a pioneer civilization, may prove hard to handle in one that is old and closely knit. A military society needs different traits from a peaceful one. It is quite possible that in the course of time the fox rather than the lion or the bear may prove the type with highest survival value.

The leading research scientists with whom I have been talking feel fairly confident about the job of undoing the ravages mankind has inflicted upon itself through sheer ignorance. They believe we can teach ourselves in a short time, possibly only a couple of decades, to cure our psychological maladjustments, eat properly, wear sensible clothing, exercise adequately in the open air, get enough sunshine over nearly all of the epidermis, live in houses whose windows permit ultraviolet light to come through.

But science is also doing something else to us: it is opening before us vistas of life such as man has never experienced in all his days upon this planet. Not so long ago, for example, a human being for the very first time used the "lens" of the new ultra-powerful electronic microscope, an event second in the history of microscopy only to the original invention, if indeed it is not still more important. That dramatic event is but an earnest of the things that are to come. What is the world of tomorrow like, as it is seen, not by some imaginative journalist or author of romances, but by the scientists themselves, the shock troops in the advance of mankind? Some of the outline of that future world will be given in my next and succeeding articles.

BRUCE BLIVEN

Verne Marshall of Iowa

EVER SINCE he turned up in New York a few weeks ago with a No Foreign Wars Committee, headed by himself, Verne Marshall of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has commanded a startling amount of space in the newspapers. Commencing with fulminations against William Allen White and the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, he then threatened the President with dire consequences should he asperse the No Foreign Wars Committee; and he has just created a minor sensation with the charge that the President failed properly to treat a peace offer carried to this country from Germany by William Rhodes Davis, a New York oil operator. More bombshells are promised.

Today, at fifty-one, Marshall is in many ways typical of small-town editors of his generation; but he has a particular talent for hell-raising—and for publicity. He attended college and was started on a journalistic career on his father's newspaper, The Gazette, when the World War broke out. He served for a time with a French ambulance unit in 1916, but when the United States entered, he enlisted in the home forces and became a first lieutenant in the motor transport.

Back home, he resumed work on The Gazette. In most ways the paper was the prosperous organ of its kind, with columns of gossip and country correspondence, but readers began to notice that the editor was never without a fight on his hands. His column on the front page was written in the choleric, rather brutal manner characteristic of Colonel Robert McCormick's Chicago Tribune, and Marshall wrote crusading stories in the news columns under his own by-line.

Typical, and serving to show his attitude toward social affairs, was Marshall's impassioned campaign against the school textbooks written by Professor Harold Rugg of Columbia University. He reported that he had been driving with his daughter through a dilapidated section of Cedar Rapids when the girl asked innocently, "Papa, why do people have to live in such awful houses?" Upon questioning, he concluded that her mind had been contaminated by Rugg's books, which she was studying in school. The Gazette's guns were unlimbered; occasionally whole pages were devoted to the crusade. But there was doubt in some minds that the war on the books originated in the manner described. Marshall commenced his attacks in 1934, which was the year Homer Chaillaux, Red-calling Americanization director of the American Legion, interested himself in the drive against the textbooks, and the Hearst papers and others took up the cudgels. Chaillaux and Marshall are close friends; Marshall was invited to deliver the Americanization address at the Legion's 1936 convention.

The first signs of the Iowa "farm revolt," which was to continue sporadically for several years, came in 1930 with enforcement of a law making mandatory the testing of cattle for tubercular germs—a good law in itself, but a burden to farmers. The "cow war" resulted, troops were called, and two men were sentenced to prison

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

under Iowa's criminal-syndicalism law. After a while the farmers cooled down and accepted the tests. The sentences of the two convicted men were quietly forgotten. Then, years later, Marshall remembered. He shot off fireworks and the men went to prison.

Curiously enough, the crusade which won Marshall's paper the 1936 Pulitzer prize for meritorious public service was his least effective. For years he had accused state officials, including officers of the state university at Iowa City, of mishandling contracts for university buildings. He obtained a legislative investigation, but no convictions resulted.

In answering his detractors in a radio broadcast delivered over a CBS network January 1, Marshall explained that "back in the United States, in Iowa," he is known for the enemies he has made. Actually his reputation is more for handing it out than for trading punches. A rather mild man in appearance, of medium height, with a long face adorned by hexagonal spectacles, he likes to make table-pounding speeches. His editorial staff expects from him alternating paternal kindness and cursings, after the "old man" school of journalism. But in personal controversy he is not effective. When cornered in an argument, or questioned closely, he is apt to resort to irrelevancies. Pressed further, his temper lets go and he offers to fight somebody.

When Washington correspondents challenged his assertion that "two" Axis powers had offered peace terms, when only Germany was at war, Marshall explained his error with the amazing answer that he had "seen only a carbon copy" of the peace agenda. And in his radio addresses he seems less concerned with the aims of the No Foreign Wars Committee than with predicting unnamed catastrophes for anybody who disparages him.

Marshall says the idea of the committee was born in the extreme isolationist wing of the Willkie campaign, and that afterward he got The Gazette—he is only part owner—to put up the money to start. Others see a plot of American appeasers, with Marshall chosen for his Midwestern background as window dressing. If the latter supposition is correct, someone acted with insufficient knowledge of the editor from Iowa. Verne Marshall has his head down and is swinging. There is no assurance that he will not land on friend as well as foe.

DALE KRAMER

A Fighting Faith in Labor

I SEE BY THAT ORACLE of our time, the AP, that the Reuther plan for plane production has been called "impracticable" by unnamed "high defense experts." If that's a news story, then I'm a dadaist poet. It didn't take much guessing to guess, when the plan was first publicized in I. F. Stone's articles, that it would meet the glacial hostility of those who won't and can't think in terms of the planning of the unused resources of a whole industry. To be sure, the "experts" were not brusque. They made their cryptic statement "reluctantly," since the plan showed labor's desire to help with defense. It broke their hearts. But, heartbreak or not, the plan—not only in itself, but as a symbol of what labor can do—opens for us some long vistas.

Every culture needs a fighting faith. I don't mean a religion, which is (as the anthropologist views it) a product of fear; nor do I mean a crusading messianism, which is (as the psychiatrist views it) the product of the aggressive drives in us. I mean something that answers the question: who and what are there among us to keep our world going and moving forward?

We long ago lost our belief in kings and aristocrats. We were never much of a priestly country, and God forbid we should ever become one. We have had only intermittent enthusiasms for the generals; and it is an open secret that the politicians form our caste of untouchables. We pay the lawyers high fees and let them govern us: but if there is any purge that would command universal assent in America it would be a purge of lawyers. We have abandoned Jefferson's physiocratic belief in farmers. We never took much to Veblen's faith in the engineers. We have made half-gods of our scientists, but we view them uneasily as movie test-tube wizards who create Boris Karloffs that go berserk; and I'll confess that even Bruce Bliven's series on the new social vision of the scientists has not erased the Karloff image from my mind. We sit raptly in stuffy mosques gazing at shadows from Hollywood, or in windswept amphitheatres watching giants from Minnesota or Stanford show their prowess; but these are dream-wishes rather than our beliefs.

We have even lost our belief in the business men—the "lords of Creation." Louis Hacker now tells us in retrospect that up to 1900, as long as they were real captains of industry, they were worthy of belief. Perhaps as a historian he is right. But it was in the 1920's, when they were only cardboard Humpty-Dumpties perched dangerously on walls of promises, that our

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

belief in them and in their "new capitalism" reached its climax. They will never recover from their fall, and the class-blindness they have been showing in the past decades in Europe merely seals the coroner's verdict of death by suicide.

Since Nature abhors a vacuum of belief as well as any other, the faith of the ordinary American had to rush somewhere, and it sought out FDR here, as in England the faith of the British common man has sought out Churchill. But such leaders hold the guardianship of belief by only the slenderest of threads—their own political lives. A culture cannot be safe, it cannot even get along, until it has gone beyond the individual leader to the creative group.

How about labor? It doesn't take much social sensitiveness to know that labor's stock has recently been very low. I am not now talking of middle-class and agrarian hostility to labor, which is a problem in itself. A study of Gallup polls on labor shows that even before the hysteria over the sitdown strikes there was a body of bitter anti-labor opinion, with about the same percentage of die-hards (roughly 25 percent) on either side of the fence, and the rest troubled fence-sitters. That means that in the minds of most people the problem of labor's place is an unresolved one. And it is well known that four out of five Americans think of themselves as belonging in the middle class.

But more to the point is the feeling about labor that the young people have who are starting out on jobs or careers or the perilous voyage of the mind. We had for some time been building up for them a fighting faith in labor as a creative social force. Partly, I think, this came from the Marxian influence, partly from the democratic American tradition, and partly it went farther back than either of these to the Puritan sense of the poor as the inheritors of the earth. The recent collapse of the Left carried with it a decrease in labor's prestige. Those who had yielded so easily before the impact of Hitler's *élite* seemed no longer the stuff to fire our imagination or enlist our allegiance. And all the stuff about labor's role in the fall of France, however false when examined, didn't help much.

And now the healing thing is how well, by and large, labor is standing up under the test of the war emergency. The workers in Madrid and Barcelona, in Warsaw, in Birmingham and Manchester, in Pittsburgh and Detroit have left a good account of themselves. Why should they not? They have a greater knowledge than anyone else of a war of factories, and a greater stake in what the fighting is for.

That is the context in which the Reuther plan takes on more meaning than just the technical one of plane turnout. Trade-unionists have always been in a position to know what enters into production efficiency; but except in distressed industries like the garment trades their leaders have not been called in to share in the responsibilities of production. That Murray and Hillman for the CIO and R. J. Thomas and Reuther for the auto workers are ready now to assume a part of that responsibility is not just a matter of labor tactic, nor is it just a matter of war emergency. It represents the whole direction of trade-union striving. There is a real connection between the Reuther plan and Murray's proposal for labor representation in industrial councils. For labor is no longer to be seen as just a pressure group. Its stake in democracy is a stake in raising the whole national income. It is a stake in productive and social efficiency in the large.

I won't pretend to discuss the technical accuracy of Reuther's 500-planes-a-day production estimate. I do know that the objections thus far raised against it by the "defense experts" are the piddling objections of those who want to run a war economy by the methods of "business as usual." Even if Reuther is only half right, he would still have justified his remark on the radio that the Battle of England will be won, if at all, not on the playing-fields of Eton but on the assembly-lines of Detroit. He would still have justified my belief that labor has today more realism and more sheer social creativeness in approaching the problem of defense production than either business or the government group. When I speak of creativeness I do not want to leave the impression that this is fantasy. There is in the Reuther plan nothing of the hortatory or the desperate that makes war production a sort of national dervish dance. There is nothing in it of that haphazard wishfulness that is, under the present regime, trying to expand plane production by plastering the walls of a Detroit room with blueprints and asking the manufacturers to look at them and decide where they would fit in. No, it is not labor that is Utopian. It proceeds in calm engineering fashion by making inventories of unused production resources already available, and just as calmly going on to put them to use by a retooling method that embraces a unified plan.

Do I make a fetish of labor? I don't think so. Too many things have happened in the past few years to allow any of us the luxury of idealization. I am thinking of workers not as possessing any mystical virtue, but in their ordinary relation to production and their ordinary stake in democracy. And, even then, we shall have to extend our belief beyond workers as such. The future lies with the common man, whoever he be; and with the technicians of every sort, whether technicians of machine, brain or administrative skills. It is industry that will give us the sinews of our strength, social intelligence that can alone keep that strength from destroying us, administrative skills that can organize that strength to be effective.

These are the *élites* for us, for as distant a future as we can pierce. They are democratic *élites*, recruited from the mass and always revitalized by the mass. Our belief in them is our fighting faith in the worker.

MAX LERNER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Washington Notes

Appeasement Bloc (U. S. A. Section)

PROBABLY the aptest thing that can be said about the Senate appeasement bloc is that it has its thumb in its own eye. Its more respectable leaders, particularly Mr. Wheeler of Montana, are stoutly in favor of aid to England, and just as stoutly against any move that might make Mr. Hitler angry at America. Quite obviously, the sum of these two policies is oratorical foolishness.

Mr. Wheeler's ablest colleague in the appeasement bloc is Senator Bennett Clark of Missouri. Both men have emotional reasons for opposing war. In 1917-18, Mr. Wheeler was a federal district attorney in Montana; in a state that was then a pit of medievalism, he refused to join in with wartime Red-baiting. Patrioteers hounded him temporarily from public life. During the same period—or at least until he sailed to France with the AEF—Mr. Clark was secretary to his father, the great Champ Clark. The Clark family was convinced that Wilson had unfairly euchred Mr. Clark out of the presidency in 1912; it watched the unfolding of the Wilsonian war policy with an embittered eye.

By coincidence, Messrs. Wheeler and Clark both have wives of great political ability, whose sympathies are deeply isolationist, or, to use the appeasement bloc's term, "anti-involvement." Certain New Dealers have long ascribed Mr. Wheeler's hostility to the administration to his wife's influence. Three years ago, at an informal dinner party, Mr. Roosevelt made a mild jest about Mrs. Wheeler's power. Relayed back to the Senator, it is reported to have greatly angered him. Mrs. Clark was actively interested in the Nye Committee, of which her husband was a member, and in the neutrality laws that grew from its findings.

If a man is moved by injustices suffered in his youth—as in the case of Mr. Wheeler—or by loyalty to his father's memory—as in the case of Mr. Clark—it may be difficult to feel harshly toward him. But this is not the whole story about Messrs. Wheeler and Clark. The former is chairman of the Interstate Commerce Committee, which means that he is in frequent consultation with railroad executives. In a wholly proper sense, he is the railroads' Senator. Many New Dealers think that the railroad managements are incompetent, that they have failed to expand their facilities to meet the expected defense traffic load, that some kind of direct government intervention, probably patterned after the 1917-18 railroad administration, is urgently needed. Senator Clark has opposed the extension of government control over business throughout the New Deal.

How much trouble the Senate appeasement bloc can make is an open question. The spectacular misfiring of the No Foreign Wars Committee has been no help to its members. For the next little while, they will be busy proving that they are not agents of Herr Goering, *via* Messrs. W. R. Davis and Verne Marshall. Nor can they say that they are opposed to Mr. Roosevelt's present policies because they may injure the railroads, or industrial privileges and profits.

Mr. Wheeler's greatest weapon is his subcommittee to investigate foreign tie-ups with American business, authorized at the last session. The Department of Justice's anti-trust division, under Mr. Thurman Arnold, has already revealed intimate connections between firms in this country making airplane and warship instruments and similar concerns in Germany. Mr. Arnold has also investigated magnesium and other rare, light metals. It is believed that the anti-trust division has still further evidence not sufficiently conclusive to present to a grand jury. Mr. Wheeler is one of the ablest prosecutors ever to sit in the Senate; if he wishes, he presumably can conduct an investigation that will make the Dies Committee seem as footling and shabby as it really is. However, it is of course true that the bonds between American and English industries are close and widespread. By turning to these, Mr. Wheeler may be able to stir a lamentable amount of anti-English feeling.

Experts are beginning to think that the great tragedy of the defense preparations so far has been neglect of the American air-cooled airplane engine. The main reliance of our present army airplane program is on the liquid-cooled Allison, and on the projected Ford version of the British liquid-cooled Rolls-Royce Merlin. No layman is competent to judge the air-cooled-liquid-cooled controversy. But it seems to be a fact that the navy, which stuck to American air-cooled designs, has now developed a fighting plane that is faster than anything in European skies. The worst hitch in our airplane-production program has been the change-over from air-cooled to liquid-cooled engines, and at least some technicians now think that the shift was unnecessary.

In all wars, there are always little-noticed events that later are seen to have "decided" the war. Many observers believe—or hope—that one such event may be the anxiously awaited visit of Air Marshal Hugh C. T. ("Stuffy") Dowding, the dour-faced Scot who was chief of the RAF Fighter Command during last September's Battle of England. Airplane engineers of every nation have been concerned with speed and maneuverability; Marshal Dowding was a pilot in the Great War, and most of his adult life has been concerned with the fighting—as distinguished from flying—qualities of warplanes. It is understood here that he alone was responsible for the fact that British planes mounted eight machine guns, and had a burst of fire, consequently, capable of sawing a German bomber in two. In Washington, Marshal Dowding is expected to advise on the armament of American-built planes. According to an unconfirmable report, moreover, he is bringing secret British devices to deal with Germany's night bombers. His visit may foreshadow the end of Nazi air superiority.

The controversy over tax-exempt government bonds, which is to be fought out in the coming session, may lead to far-reaching reform. The United States Conference of Mayors, together with the Governors of most states, grimly oppose the abolition of exemption privileges. Without them, they say, they could not sell their city and state obligations. Congressional leaders, convinced that their influence cannot be overcome, are considering a plan under which the federal government, from its superior borrowing and tax-gathering capacities, will bind itself to make loans and cash grants to states, cities and other local bodies. It will mean a new relationship among American governmental divisions.

Washington T. R. B.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Hit and a Miss

"NIGHT TRAIN" is a picture I can urge you to go see. But I cannot urge anybody to see anything that is playing at the Globe Theatre in New York City. The Globe is one of those Broadway fleatraps which hawk at modest prices the pick of the refuse left in the distributor's bin after every theatre exhibitor with any kind of decent pitch has had first, second and third choice on everything from fair to awful. It has naturally built up its own kind of audience, a trampling, hoarse and hoodlum pack off the garish sidewalks of what ranks today among the first gutters of the world, Broadway and Seventh, from Fortieth to Fifty-second. Recently the Globe has been in luck, having three first-runs in a row that other houses couldn't handle because of commitments, etc., but that people wanted to see. So it ran its prices up as high as 75 cents and took ads. The reviewers were very generous about the picture and mentioned nothing else.

The Globe was suddenly rolling. But it didn't fix its broken-down seats, it didn't open a window, and it couldn't change its habits or the yawp and scuffle of its regulars. You pay first-class prices to fight for a seat and find the picture starting half an hour later than schedule, part of which waiting time is taken up with a throwaway advertising short, and most of the rest of the time is devoted to sweat and suffocation and being walked over. If you can imagine a Turkish bath in a tight seat with all your clothes on, the steam coming from roiling vats of old underwear, you will know what fusty anachronism is ahead of you. It may, of course, be merely naïve to expect that a reviewer's first duty of kindness is to the audience which supports him, but there's your report.

This "Night Train" is another disciple-of-Hitchcock film, when you get a chance to catch it and a breath of air too. It was directed by Carol Reed, whose "Three on a Weekend" was also good but quite different—except for the swell atmosphere of both in an English Coney Island. Even granting that a similarity of subject material could explain a similarity of treatment, and that the two priceless vague sporting toffs from "The Lady Vanishes" (Basil Radford and Naunton Wayne) practically suggest their own parts, still you see devices lifted bodily from the magic fat man's workshop. The opening shot, a long swooping truck; the use of music to cover underground activity; the high mechanical stuff used in the escape; Hitchcock's favorite train with guards and counterguards and messages; the sinister play of light allowed by the oculist—even lines, as when the Englishman abroad drops a newspaper in disgust and almost disbelief, "Why, it's all in German!" The film assimilates these things to its own method, and there would be no use mentioning them if they did not point a future lesson: Hitchcock's devices are effective because they arose out of his inventiveness in achieving a purpose. Used again and again as script stunts, they will become merely familiar, as dull coins as Ruth Roland on the railroad tracks, Pearl White and the buzz saw.

But Carol Reed has learned mainly how to keep a story going in a straight and breathless line, and this is the main thing, giving rise to its own devices. A Czech inventor with a steel-hardening process is whisked away from the Nazis to safety in England, from which he is whisked by the Nazis away to Berlin, from which he is just barely whisked again by one of those dashing young chaps who are the backbone of the empire's Intelligence Service, Rex Harrison this time. The inventor has a daughter, Margaret Lockwood, which fact supplies the excuse for some restrained and very fetching romance and also for the extra-intelligent efforts of the Intelligence. (The Nazi admiralty has Paul von Hernreid as opposite number.)

As in all counter-counter-spy plots, there are gaps in the fabric—such as that a man who can fool the entire foreign headquarters hasn't sense to pick a name from the army register; and there are two or three time-jerks that seem more or less like a lazy-man's out—from Prague to England, for example; from London to Berlin; from twenty miles behind (in a fast, equal chase) to just rounding the last bend. But the action is always well in hand for the purpose of the present, and the present is a magic carpet. The movies have now grown and broadened to where the good men realize that in telling even a fast and furious story you have to have people, and that these people should have some real life of their own and a place to live.

Where "Night Train" automatically becomes one of the best of its kind is in its attention to character all through the minor parts, so that there is no burlesque hero or burlesque villain on the one hand; and no mugging extras on the other. And so slight a sequence as that in English Intelligence headquarters has just the delightful air of how even big things happen in a certain everyday way, without Paul Muni, and life goes on. And we know from memoirs that the German admiralty was that way in wartime once, at least. And the dialogue throughout is both sharp and subtle, gay, understated and perfectly relevant to what goes on with no jingo and no Beast of Berlin (Sidney Gilliat's and Frank Launder's screen play). It is all a very nice triumph of skill and maturity in films, and thus a pleasure to have.

"Comrade X," if you catch it in the 25-35-cent category on an off evening, is cautiously recommended. It is a burlesque at the expense of the Soviet Union and often funny as such, with some neat lines and a whole library of old-time movie slapstick. There is also Hedy Lamarr to look at—and unfortunately listen to as well, for her voice is brassy and shrill, and in direction King Vidor's idea of funnier is often simply louder. Oscar Homolka and Vladimir Sokoloff in brief parts take the honors, for Clark Gable and Felix Bressart and the rest are victims of the way the story has grafted spoofing onto some very serious spleen (Ben Hecht did a good part of the screen play, and Hecht has always tasted bile at the thought of the Comrades). So the painful parts of it come when light comedy takes itself in heavy and bad-tempered earnest. The familiar parts are those where laughter was released purely on its own good conduct, and the funniest I think was the blackout of the pallbearers after the shooting, from dignity with a dirge to something like a scuttle, to complete rout with the coffin bouncing and bursting and the assassin hustling off out of it. This one should have had the Marx Brothers and no time for amateur politics: with its appreciation of the chase, the breakaway and the impossible, it would have been a riot as "A Night in the Kremlin."

OTIS FERGUSON

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Bandwagon

Diplomatic sources said the Italian and Russian delegates had engaged in fist fights and refused to speak to each other when the conference broke up. The Russians objected to Italian participation, contending the Fascisti had no interest in the Danube, but Premier Mussolini's representatives announced that the Rome government had purchased two small tugboats to fly Italian flags on the Danube. – *News story in The New York Times.*

Robert Green, '41, reported on the activities of the Student Education Committee at the Thelomathesian meeting held Friday in Gunnison Memorial Chapel. He pointed out that the committee was responsible for lengthening the Christmas vacation. – *From a column in The Canton, N. Y., Commercial Advertiser.*

In political circles today it was charged that the British were giving copies of Prime Minister Churchill's speech to Italian prisoners in Egypt. This was said to be contrary to international law. – *News item in The New York Times.*

There is another point that must make Lord Halifax particularly acceptable to most Americans. He is deeply religious. In the affairs of daily life, he seeks guidance not only from his government and his own richly varied experience but also from his God. Such a man can be trusted. – *From an editorial in The Chicago Daily News.*

Fore!

A golf club near London has posted the following wartime rules:

1. The position of known delayed-action bombs will be marked by red flags placed at a reasonably but not guaranteed safe distance.

2. A ball removed by enemy action may be replaced as near as possible to where it lay, or if lost or destroyed, another ball may be dropped not nearer the hole without penalty.

3. Competitors during gunfire or while bombs are falling may take cover without penalty. – *UP dispatch to The New York Times.*

Be It Ever So Humble

A Funeral Home Where You May Receive Your Friends—in a True Homelike Atmosphere. – *Advertisement of the Johnson Funeral Home in The News, Yates Center, Kansas.*

Free Press, Spoon-Fed Public

Officials of public-service corporations, utility companies, transportation and insurance companies—as well as heads of industries, associations and groups of many kinds—realize that a public understanding and appreciation of their policies and purposes would smooth out many rough places and prevent many unpleasant incidents. Our point is that the first step should be to tell the press what the public is to be told. And the best way to reach the press is through The Publishers' Auxiliary. – *From a booklet, "Influence at the Source," put out by The Publishers' Auxiliary.*

No-No-Nanette Department

Mr. Murray ran for the Connecticut State Senate in 1938 on the Democratic ticket, performing musical-comedy routines during the campaign. He was defeated. – *Item in The New York Herald Tribune.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

Correspondence

Economic Problem Number One

SIR: There can be no doubt of the soundness of the general theme of "Standards of Living and of Life" [The New Republic, December 9]. The employment of a relatively small proportion of the population of the country in agriculture makes possible a higher standard of comfort and well-being.

The economic and social losses involved in Lloyd George's program of "farm homes fit for heroes" are almost incalculable. Denmark and many other countries in Europe have subscribed to the same idea of settling a maximum number of persons on farms, but in general these programs have been carried out in a more orderly and constructive fashion, although their long-time effects do not seem to me to be in the direction of national welfare.

There is no doubt that a large proportion of the people in this country do not have a satisfactory diet, but it seems to me that this problem is somewhat overstated in your article. Taking the nation as a whole, farm people may be less well nourished than city-dwellers, but the agricultural part of this picture is distorted by the inclusion of large numbers of Negro sharecroppers and farm-workers whose condition is not typical. The problem here seems to be one of education. Farm-dwellers certainly have the best chance of providing themselves with an adequate diet from the land with a minimum of expenditure.

It seems to be true that no nation can raise its standard of living mainly by the export of agricultural produce. In spite of this, I can see no other prospect than that the United States must continue to produce large quantities of cotton, tobacco and certain fruits for the export market for many decades to come. Our other export problems will be taken care of by the natural increase in our population, but the advantage that we have in the production of certain of these agricultural staples seems to suggest that we should continue to produce them.

There can be no question that the welfare of farmers would be promoted both in the United States and Canada by the transfer of large numbers of workers from agriculture to other occupations, provided there are opportunities for satisfactory employment. At this time, one of the most serious problems in agriculture results from the fact that during the past decade the normal movement of population from country to city has been slowed down and in some cases reversed by the prevailing unemployment in cities. Happily this situation seems now to be changing, and I hope that the change will be reasonably permanent. There are large areas of farm land in the United States that will not produce enough to provide even a minimum standard of living for a farm family.

Public acquisition of such land assists in the transfer of such population by reducing the period of starvation that is otherwise necessary to induce farm people to move from undesirable loca-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions. This movement can be brought about with least distress by the movement of young people to regions that provide better opportunities. It seems to me especially important that educational opportunities be provided for young people in the unproductive farming regions so as to permit them to obtain productive employment in whatever activity they wish to engage.

Ithaca, N. Y. W. I. MYERS

SIR: Increased output per worker on farms must inevitably mean a smaller proportion of the population working on farms and a larger proportion working in cities, in order to translate the higher productivity into higher standards of living. Your readers may be interested to know that a recent publication from the Department of Agriculture, "Technology on the Farm," discusses the same issue with a great deal of detailed illustration of the many ways in which technical developments have increased agricultural productivity. In addition, this publication contains a section, "Some Suggested Lines of Action," pp. 81-100, which discusses in forthright fashion what we can do to deal with the situation.

The discussion of lines of action in this report proceeds on the assumption that it will be impossible for many years ahead to absorb the excess rural people in cities, and suggests the various things that might be done to give them a fuller and richer life on farms pending the time when industrial expansion goes at a rate and is maintained at a level which again will provide full city employment for all those no longer needed on farms.

The article, "Standards of Living and of Life," does not discuss the problems that need to be solved if we ever *are* to provide adequate opportunities in cities for the people not needed on the farms, so as to utilize fully their productive capacity in the cities and at the same time provide markets for efficient farm output operating at full capacity.

This is the greatest fundamental issue that our economy now faces. Certain suggestions as to ways of dealing with it, integrating both financial proposals and industrial proposals, are presented in a recent publication by the National Resources Planning Board, called "The Structure of the American Economy, II. Toward Full Use of Resources," June, 1940. The sections contributed to this report by Alvin Hansen and myself contain specific ideas as to lines of action in this field to establish and maintain full employment and full production once the defense drive is over.

MORDECAI EZEKIEL, Economic Adviser,
Washington, D. C. Department of Agriculture

A New Student Group

SIR: We believe your readers would be interested in the Student League for Progressive Action, a new group, which came into being at the conference held in New Brunswick, New Jersey, by the International Student Service. A number of delegates there, representing independent progressive groups in various colleges, in particular the Swarthmore Student Union and the Harvard Liberal Union, felt the need for a nationwide organization to coördinate their activities, particularly one which did not oppose aid to England, and which was not dedicated to a narrow, sectarian domestic policy.

The Student League for Progressive Action is composed to a large degree of former members of the American Student Union, who found its closely controlled policies incompatible with their convictions and who felt it impossible to change those policies. The League supports Britain and China in their anti-totalitarian struggle, urging Britain to clarify her war aims; it feels that aid to Britain is essential to our own defense; it considers resistance to any threat to labor's right to organize and strike, to civil liberty and to student and academic freedom equally essential to our defense.

Readers, particularly students, who wish to obtain further information about the Student League for Progressive Action should write to Peter Kuh, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

PETER KUH, Program Chairman,
Swarthmore Student Union
EDWARD AMES, President, Harvard Liberal Union
Swarthmore, Pa.

From The New Republic Mail Bag

"V. S. Y.," a New Republic correspondent who reported last year about the position of Negroes in the pleasant Florida city of Winter Park, writes us again to tell of efforts to make recreational facilities there available to Negroes. To a request that Negroes be permitted to buy seats in the seldom occupied gallery of the principal movie house, once or twice a week, the manager of the house, although desirous of coöperating, could not oblige, since there was no side entrance and use of the front entrance by Negroes was not to be thought of. The manager of a smaller movie theatre, which shows older pictures at lower prices, would have been glad to permit Negroes to attend on specified days but for the fact that whites would not care to occupy benches or chairs used occasionally by Negroes. Our correspondent hopes that Rollins College, or the Woman's Club, or "even the churches—a bold suggestion—may decide to do something about the problem."

Tuskegee Institute sends figures on lynchings for 1940. They totaled five, two more than in 1939. Two lynchings were in Georgia, two in Alabama and one in Tennessee. Of the persons lynched, one was white and four were Negro. The offenses charged were wife-beating and drunkenness, attempted rape, attempting to qualify to vote, an altercation with a white man and failure to refer to a white man as "Mr." There were twenty-two reports of instances in which officers of the law prevented lynchings, three in Northern states and nineteen in Southern states.

William A. Wittick, of Peoria, Illinois, believes that the census returns offer a partial answer to Irving Dilliard's query, "What Is the Middle West Thinking?" (The New Republic, December 23). "Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, North and South Dakota showed a decline in population. California showed a tremendous increase, also a half-million majority for Roosevelt. The 'dust-bowlers' from the first-mentioned states went west. Had they remained in the Middle West they might have carried their states for the President."

D. H. Palmer's "weight per horsepower," as a yardstick for motor-car performance ("Automobiles of 1941," The New Republic, December 30), is questioned by E. H. Sherbardy, Rainesville, Ohio, who says that "acceleration is dependent on the characteristic power curve of engines—the rear-axle gear ratio and the weight." Mr. Sherbardy, writing in a friendly and discursive mood, adds that New Republic readers who are interested in these technical matters would enjoy studying Riedler's "Scientific Merits of Automobiles," a book published about 1912, the diagrams of which are still instructive. Mr. Sherbardy says that the book is obtainable at the New York Public Library.

Never a week without word from Ferguson fans: "This is the fifth straight issue in which Otis Ferguson has written on the movies," writes Edward T. James, from Cambridge, Massachusetts. "To one who used to wait impatiently between his movie reviews (at two and three-week intervals), this is almost too good to be true." And Celia Salkin, Passaic, New Jersey, asks what she can do to induce The New Republic to publish more OF book reviews.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

The People's Theatre

THESE LAST TWO YEARS have been a period of confessions and self-justifications. By now the publishers' lists are full of books by ex-officers of beaten armies and ex-statesmen of conquered nations; by ex-Nazis who have quarreled with Hitler, ex-Communists who have escaped from the Russian secret police and ex-New Dealers who have decided that Roosevelt wasn't really being fair to business men. "Arena"[1] doesn't at all belong in that category, in spite of the fact that Hallie Flanagan is ex-director of the Federal Theatre Project and hence is describing a venture that ended in defeat. Unlike some of the others I have mentioned, she has no apologies to make and no uneasy sense of guilt to conceal. Instead she feels what I think is a wholly justified pride in the work she helped to accomplish, besides gratitude toward most of her collaborators and an immense liking for the actors who worked under her direction—"the best actors in the world," she says, quoting Polonius, "either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited." By talking little about herself and a great deal about the Federal Theatre, she gives us an extremely favorable impression of both. And she can write, too, another circumstance that sets her apart from most of the people now publishing their disgruntled memoirs.

Her story reminds us that the Federal Theatre under her direction had three great achievements to its credit. In the first place, it provided steady work for eight thousand penniless theatrical people. That was its primary purpose, under the law setting up the WPA, and was quite enough to justify the money spent on the project. But in the second place, it also brought stage shows, at a low price or none at all, to people who were starved for entertainment and in many cases had never seen a living actor. It gave regional pageants, comedies specially written to be played in the barracks of CCC camps, tent shows, marionette plays for children and Living Newspapers for the broad public; and much of what it did was tied up with the daily lives of people watching the performance. The Federal Theatre was creating an entirely new audience, just as free libraries had created a new audience for books; that explains why the commercial theatre tried hard to defend it later, when it was being attacked in Congress. And in the third place, it produced an astonishing number of good plays, old and new, highbrow and popular, everything from Marlowe and Shakespeare to superrealism and "The Swing Mikado." It was for a time the center of almost everything that was fresh and experimental on the American stage. More than that, it came closer than anything else we have had—perhaps closer than anything we shall get in the future—to being an American national theatre.

[1] Arena, by Hallie Flanagan. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce. 484 pages, illustrated. $3.

If this is so, how did it happen that the Federal Theatre was stopped after four years, and stopped completely?

To judge by Hallie Flanagan's story, which is charitably written but often quite revealing in its incidental remarks about human motives, the theatre project had the misfortune to focus on itself much of the antagonism aroused by the work-relief program as a whole. And this program, in turn, conflicted with prejudices that lie so deep in American society that they are almost part of a national religion. Americans tend to think that wealth is a divine reward for thrift and self-denial. In the same way, they tended for a long time to regard poverty and unemployment as God's inexorable punishment meted out to the lazy and shiftless. This feeling had changed by the end of Mr. Roosevelt's second term, to the extent that even conservative congressmen were willing to admit, in principle, that the destitute should be fed; perhaps they should even be clothed. But to give them work relief was flying in the face of Providence. And to give them play relief was worse than that, in the eyes of these congressmen: it was an obscene violation of every principle expounded by the Founding Fathers and Horatio G. Alger.

And besides conflicting with ancient doctrines, the Federal Theatre revealed the strength of class hatreds that are usually half-concealed. Since it charged low admissions, it attracted workers and the unemployed—a class of people who, by the standards of prosperous Americans, deserve no entertainment at all, and certainly none provided at public expense. One excuse given for the suppression of The Federal Theatre Magazine, in 1937, was that "there was too much emphasis on poor audiences, too many pictures of squatters in Oklahoma and shirt-sleeved crowds in the city parks." The state director for Washington said, "I don't think we should try to get any other class of people except the usual type of theatre-goers, because an audience that looks poor is apt to give the impression of being radical." The adjective most frequently applied to the project was "communistic." The only justification for it was that there were actually a few Communists among the actors employed. Some of them made the position of the project even less secure by working harder for the revolution than for the theatre; that was their duty as they conceived it, but it was shortsighted as a political policy.

A further handicap to the Federal Theatre was the fact of its being involved in the long standing distrust of the lower middle classes for the theatre as a whole. This is a sentiment that survives from the seventeenth century, when the stage, to good Puritans, was not only the devil's workshop but also the chief amusement of their enemies the aristocrats. Thus, the theatre project was damned for its royalist antecedents as well as for its working-class sympathies. And the speeches against it made by some congressmen were also inspired by a violent philistinism, a hatred not only for actors and playwrights but for every human activity faintly tinged with intelligence.

Even this combination of antagonisms might have been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

evaded if the Federal Theatre had been less successful. The trouble was that some of its plays attracted huge crowds and were widely discussed in the newspapers, so that the resentment against it grew with the publicity. In Washington the bureaucrats began to get frightened; they thought that the quarrel over the theatre project might end by destroying the whole WPA, and with it their own jobs. Miss Flanagan was indirectly warned a hundred times. Several of the state administrators told her that the ideal plays for their jurisdictions would be the sort that didn't get talked about in the papers. After Harry Hopkins left the WPA, more and more trouble descended on her; there was endless obstruction and, though she doesn't use the word, outright sabotage. The wise people among her assistants resigned one after the other, but Miss Flanagan was not wise in that political fashion, and she stayed on in Washington to fight for her beliefs. Until almost the end, she was not even permitted to defend herself and her actors from the irresponsible charges of the Dies and Woodrum Committees. It seems that officials had decided that the theatre project was to be made a scapegoat, in the exact sense of the word—all the sins of the WPA were to be loaded on its back and it was to be publicly stoned to death, in order that other relief projects might live on in happy obscurity.

Looking back over this story she tells so well, with affection and wry humor and a surprising absence of ill feeling for those who made her life miserable, I get a curious impression. I cannot feel that the principal blame for the death of the Federal Theatre rests with the newspapers and magazines that attacked it as a means of "soaking the raw deal." Nor does it rest with the congressmen who hated it so much that they refused to be told the truth about it—not even with Joe Starnes of Alabama, who thought that Christopher Marlowe was a Communist; maybe he wasn't so far wrong after all, considering that Marlowe belonged to the secret police of Queen Elizabeth's revolutionary government, which Catholic historians tell us was almost as ruthless as Stalin's. Nor does it rest with the bureaucrats in Washington who were quite willing to sacrifice the project so long as their own jobs were saved. The curious impression I get is that the principal blame rests with ourselves—with you the reader, and me the writer, in so far as we represent progressive opinion in the United States.

We liked the idea of the Federal Theatre; we went to some of the plays when they were sufficiently recommended by Brooks Atkinson of The New York Times (whose record was much better than our own), and at the very end, when it was too late, we perhaps signed protests against its suppression. That has been the career of too many progressive people, signing indignant protests when it was too late. Afterwards we were properly regretful and perhaps wrote editorials ridiculing Mr. Starnes of Alabama. But during the four preceding years, when we might have helped to build up a sentiment for the Federal Theatre so strong that Congress would not have dared to abolish it; when we might have proved to Mr. Roosevelt that his always good intentions were receiving wide popular approval, we had done, well, not exactly nothing, but not really enough to matter.

And, in a sense, this failure is typical of the whole decade that has just ended. In 1933, progressive opinion in America received a chance that it was never given before—a President in sympathy with its aims and a business community so frightened that for once it was willing to accept liberal measures. Brave things were done in the following years, but not enough of them; and some of the bravest attempts were permitted to fail through lack of intelligent support. The progressives had their chance and most of them lost it—sometimes because they failed to see it, sometimes because they saw but failed to grasp it, and sometimes because they were so busy quarreling among themselves that after grasping it they let it slip from their hands. The story would have been different if more of us had been as imaginative and hard-working and self-forgetful as Hallie Flanagan.

MALCOLM COWLEY

Ralph Bates's Mexico

The Fields of Paradise, by Ralph Bates. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 382 pages. $2.50.

ONE OF the striking characteristics of the contemporary novel is the attractive force exerted by countries like Spain, Mexico and China upon some of the best novelists of more bourgeois lands. Certain of these attractions are obvious: prolonged social upheaval; a life less urbanized and less urbane, with more violence and more poetry at the heart of it; a mode of reaction less conventional, or rather with conventions so much more powerful that they can better be called traditions; in any case, conventions so distinct from those prevailing in London, Paris and New York that the novelist can perceive them with fresh eyes as if they were not conventional, *i. e.*, not habitual at all. The upheavals that crack the settled crust of life in these countries are such as enlist the writer's sympathies, yet are remote enough from the field of his habitual participation so that he can keep himself somewhat free from a too narrowing partisanship and can see beneath the surface of immediate programs, slogans and loyalties of faction.

Ralph Bates has found in Mexico, the setting of his latest novel, a land admirably suited to his talents and outlook. Indeed, the word "setting" does his book an injustice, for it implies a foreground of privately constructed plot which the author carries with him from outside and plants mechanically in a background which he has found or constructed. Mexico, in Bates's "Fields of Paradise," is not the setting but the very substance of the novel. These things could have been said and done, these issues of our universal life could have been raised in this particular form, only in Mexico.

Bates sees Mexico here as poet, philosopher and novelist, not as politician. This "confused" picture of the Mexican revolution is the true confusion of the revolution itself, hence far more accurate and profound than Bates's recent magazine articles on Mexico, with their too ready generalizations and their too uncritical acceptance of official and partisan versions such as are dished out to every foreign writer going to a land to report on its life and institutions. As is so often the case, the artist possesses a more penetrating eye, the poet a deeper if more intuitive perception, than the strictly political commentator—even when, as in this case, they happen to be the same individual.

"The Fields of Paradise" deals with one Felipe Ma-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tanzas, a young wanderer, a "man of the paths" uprooted from his native village as the result of his murder of an overseer in a moment of anger, and thereafter leading the life of an itinerant firework-maker and vendor of rockets who goes from village to village following the calendar of the innumerable local *fiestas*. It is the story of his accidental involvement in the lives of the villagers of San Lorenzo, of his accidental encounter with the universal tyranny prevailing there, in such a way that his resistance becomes inextricably interwoven with the smoldering resistance of the natives and his break from the local jail the signal for their uprising against the village tyrants. In the course of his struggle for personal justice, he finds himself a new *tierra*, a village to be attached to as his own, a desirable girl to be his wife, a good roof over his head, and a destiny intertwined once more with the common destiny of a group of his fellow men.

Because the hero is a fellow with a liking for conversation with all those he meets in his wanderings, and because he finds two worthy opponents in dialectic, a belated Spanish *conquistador* with a poetic thirst for dominion, and a learned canon of the Church who abhors revolution as the enemy of the institution he serves, the novel provides a series of philosophical statements of the immediate issues involved and the larger issues for which they serve as symbols. Indeed, quite a number of the characters in "The Fields of Paradise" are great talkers—suggesting another advantage of the Mexican scene, for great talkers are not a rarity there. The speech of all of them is flavored with the poetry that comes from old sayings; it is rhythmic with traditional rhythms rooted deep in the soul of this people; and it is lit at moments with the sparks that fly from the conflict of Spanish and Indian cultures and of communal with feudal outlooks. Bates finds in the speech of the folk some of the poetry which the Celtic revival found in the peasant speech of County Galway. The effect is intensified by the fresh, unfamiliar flavor that comes from the literal translation of common expletives and idioms.

I do not wish to give you the impression that the philosophical implications ride the narrative: the novel is written with passion and a sense of strangeness and violence at the core of life; it deals with exciting events, a jailbreak, a vividly told tale of the storming of a village plaza and the semi-armored inn named "I Am Laughing" which serves as fortress to the village tyrants; but as exciting even as the storming of the Plaza are the clashes of ideas in the parleys between the rebel leader and the Spanish soldier of fortune, between the canon and the village priest, and between the canon and the leader of the rebellion.

So effectively have these been dramatized that the erotic passages dealing with the surrender of the virgin Candelaria to her lover on the bare hillside, and the deliberately poetic and symbolic portions dealing with moon-mist and unexpected music and the folk tale of the bird of fear, Xicucu, whose cry dispels revelry and wonder, have less emotional energy, less symbolic significance and real poetry, than the conflicts of conversation and action that make up the core of the story. But it is precisely this superiority of the argument and action over the deliberate efforts at symbolic poetry which is the measure of the real power of Ralph Bates as a master of the novelist's art.

BERTRAM D. WOLFE

The Diary of Mankind

An Encyclopedia of World History, Ancient, Medieval and Modern, Chronologically Arranged; Compiled and Edited by William L. Langer. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1,249 pages. $5.50.

THE FAMOUS COMPENDIUM of Dr. Karl Ploetz has come of age at last. Three-quarters of a century ago, the methodical German teacher compiled a chronological summary of world history from the earliest times. It became almost at once the indispensable companion of the historical student, who naturally has frequent occasion to forget the sequence of events. The original *Auszug* was dry and cryptic, but it became more explicit and elaborate in the American revisions of William H. Tillinghast and Harry Elmer Barnes. Yet still the epitome sternly discouraged lingering and browsing. It was set in several sizes of type, and abounded in bold-face and italic stresses of names, treaties and whatever words and phrases had struck the author and editors as especially memorable; there were as many scarecrows in the field as there were cornstalks. The old Ploetz, in short, was rather a catalogue than a book.

That is not true of the present encyclopedia. Professor William L. Langer of Harvard University and his fifteen collaborators have done much more than merely revise and modernize Ploetz. The basic chronological arrangement, and the indentations that set off the dates, have indeed been retained. The emphasis is still on conventional political, military and diplomatic history, since social and cultural trends chafe in the chronological straitjacket. Otherwise the encyclopedia is essentially a new work. None of the old plates, which had done duty for dozens of printings, has been used. Many sections have been written afresh, and most others considerably recast and edited; all of them have been brought up to date. There are more adequate sections on non-European countries, notably those in Asia and Africa, and a valuable account of developments since 1918 has of course been added. The format is larger and the type uniform and very readable. Happily, the editor has resorted to bold-face and italic type with great reserve, and has omitted the footnotes. In addition to the genealogical tables and lists of important rulers, he has enriched the encyclopedia with seventy-five historical maps.

The approach and style of the encyclopedia is more sober and less opinionated than that of its predecessor. Catiline, for example, has ceased to be a leader of Roman "anarchists," and King Henry VII of England has been graduated from a miserly extortioner to the creator of "an efficient, if arbitrary, royal financial system." The encyclopedia passes over the former judgment of Henry VIII's "cruel disposition and variable temperament" to state simply that he was married six times. The Continental System of Napoleon I no longer seems "absurd."

But the encyclopedia is far from being dull or stiltedly objective. Inevitably it breaks a lance or two for the point of view of its editors. Now and then, too, Clio sways in the contemporary breeze. After reviewing ten thousand years of sensational and gory doings without turning a hair, it was hardly to be expected that she would blanch at the episodic Nazi-Soviet pact of last year as "amazing." But these are minor blemishes, as are the occasional inac-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

curacies unavoidable in so huge a collection of facts. The important thing is that we now have a historical reference work which deserves the attention of the general reader as well as of the student and publicist.

SOLOMON F. BLOOM

The German Story

Documents on the Events Preceding the Outbreak of the War. New York: German Library of Information. 705 pages.

IT WAS A BRITISH Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs —Lord Salisbury, I think—who, when a newspaper disclosed the terms of a secret treaty, answered by saying that the publication was "wholly unauthentic and not deserving of the confidence of your Lordships' House." A fortnight later, when the accuracy of the terms was established, Lord Salisbury declared that lies were of three varieties: lies, damn lies, and lies in the grand manner. The latter were the privilege of those who held seals of office.

How mild and even benign that cynicism seems in comparison with the modern version: "The masses," Hitler wrote in "Mein Kampf," "will fall victims to a big lie more readily than to a small one, for they themselves only tell small lies, being ashamed to tell big ones. . . . Some part of even the most glaring lie will always remain behind, a fact which all associations of liars in the world know only too well." Had the editors of the diplomatic *pièces justicatives* which the German government has published known what Lord Salisbury said, they would undoubtedly have quoted him. Naturally they omit the Hitlerian version, as he himself does from later editions of his Bible. Hitler's speeches are quoted in this volume of documents—but only when they asseverate his desire for peace. The British Blue Book quotes portions of the same speeches which contain specific pledges that his ambitions were satisfied—that Austria or Czecho-Slovakia or Poland had nothing to fear; that he would never take by the sword.

The German documents differ from other colored whitewash books in that they include illustrative maps showing the iniquity of the Polish Corridor and portraits of the chief persons who figure in the documents. The best of the portraits are credited to Hoffmann—the father of the young lady who, according to Otto Strasser, had known Hitler well but spoke unwisely. She was to be cast off and her father intervened. He emerged from an interview with exclusive rights to photograph the man who then was not yet Führer. In an introduction the editors apologize for delays in publication. An English edition appeared in Berlin, but the British would not permit copies to be brought over. They interfered with "printed matter likely to elucidate the causes of war. England's contraband list is large; at the head of the list stands truth."

To the "truth" the "482 important state papers" here presented will make at least a small contribution. Historians will pore over them. They will check the German documents against the relevant ones in the collections issued by the British and French governments and they will detect some interesting inconsistencies and concealments. That task can be left to the historians and I venture here only two or three general observations.

First, it should be noted that the German collection is arranged in chapters: "The Development of German-Polish Relations"; "British War Policy"; "Germany's Efforts to Secure Peaceful Relations with Her Neighbors"; and "Poland as the Instrument of Britain's Will to War." The editors say that the documents are "unretouched." As to that we do not know. They say also that they are "not specious pleading." To that claim, the arrangement and titles give the lie. There is no index and since, in the prefatory list of documents, the dates are frequently missing, the reader must search to find whether there is anything to match something which is in the French or British collection.

Second, the preface to the German collection makes much of the fact that unlike the British Blue Book it "is accurate, not superficial, genuine, not juggled." Criticism of the Franco-British documents is justified because they contain little or nothing on the formulation of a common policy by the Quai d'Orsay and Downing Street and nothing on the negotiations with Russia either before or subsequent to Munich. But the German collection is equally pregnant with omissions. It considers Italy a European state in diplomatic relations with Germany only when Il Duce endeavors to persuade other states not to declare war on Germany. And as for Russia: the text of the Russo-German treaty is the climax of the chapter on Germany's efforts to obtain peaceful relations with her neighbors and is plumped down without warning, not being preceded by a single other document relating to Russia. Later in the collection there is a memorandum by the interpreter who was present at the interview which Sir Nevile Henderson had with the Führer at Berchtesgaden on August 23, 1939. It records that the British Ambassador "stressed the fact that he personally had never believed in a pact between Britain, France and Russia. His opinion was that Russia, by the delay, only wanted to get rid of Mr. Chamberlain in order ultimately to profit by war. He personally would rather see Germany conclude a treaty with Russia than have Britain do so." Sir Nevile makes the same astonishing admission in his book, "Failure of a Mission." Naturally the German memorandum does not mention that it was at this interview that Hitler announced his preference for war "when he was fifty to when he was fifty-five or sixty."

It is, finally, not surprising that these documents fail to mention one series of events preceding the outbreak of the war—events which Edmond Taylor fittingly describes as "the strategy of terror." If these documents come to the attention of Al Capone, he may regret that he did not put out a well-printed collection (carefully listing a few *typographical* errata) to explain that his spectacular successes had not been those of a gangster and that, although riding high, wide and handsome and with a big take, he was nevertheless still the innocent victim of a conspiracy to deprive him of *Lebensraum*. Since what he thought himself entitled to was not freely given to him, he must proceed to get it. Those from whom he got it would not be his "victims." They would be better off after than they were before. When finally, bystanders, fed up and fearing for themselves, intervened and endeavored to protect the last victim, they were declaring war on him—most unjustly—and were responsible before God and the world. The blood was on their heads. That is the argument of these documents.

LINDSAY ROGERS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Framing Father

The Man Who Loved Children, by Christina Stead. New York: Simon and Schuster. 527 pages. $2.75.

HERE IS a great stew of material by a woman writer, which, according to the jacket, has been boiled down several times. It began as a million words, then dropped to eight hundred pages, and at last to five hundred and twenty-seven. It is still no bouillon cube. Though the blurb-writer is able to say that "Part of the gemlike clarity of this book is due to the process of refinement and condensation by which the author, one of the great craftsmen of our time, has pared down, etc. . . ." the reader, who has not had access to the previous drafts, can only assume that the gemlike clarity is relative. The author of this peculiar, breathless, overwritten, incoherent novel has been hailed by Rebecca West as "one of the few people really original we have produced since the War," and by Clifton Fadiman as "the most extraordinary woman novelist produced by the English-speaking race since Virginia Woolf." If the present novel is representative of Miss Stead's work, in one sense both these statements are true: so far as I know, nothing quite like this has ever been seen in print before.

If the book must be fitted into one of the familiar niches, one can say, I suppose, that it is a satirical portrait of a self-styled idealist. The title character is Samuel Pollit, a government office holder of Washington, D. C., with an hysterical wife and a large family of lower-middle-class relatives and children. He is a crank of the free-thinking, grow-your-own-vegetables, study-the-animals, get-close-to-Nature, learn-Esperanto, work-for-world-peace-and-a-better-understanding-between-races type: in his home he is both a thinker and a clown. On his serious side he admires Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and "science"; in his comic vein he goes into a dialect act that seems to derive from Artemus Ward, T. A. Daly and the most elaborate form of baby talk. The point about this man is that, though he pretends to be a pure spirit working for the betterment of mankind, he is actually a monster of egotism who drags his family down into degrading poverty, induces his wife to commit a kind of assisted suicide, drives his daughter away from home, and imposes on the other children a Freudian father-cult that strangles their budding personalities. The title sets the tone of broad irony that blares through the book: the man did *not* love children.

This is not the first time the unconscious hypocrite has been stripped naked. What is "original" and "extraordinary" in Miss Stead's treatment is the fearful, disordered vindictiveness with which she pursues her character. Henrietta Pollit's hysterical tantrums, taken by themselves, are blood-curdling; yet they never make their full impression because the novel that encloses them is like an hysterical tirade, and the reader is put in the position of the awestruck children listening in their beds to a night-long family quarrel. That this has an effect on the reader is undeniable; whether this is a literary effect is another question. At first the reader is seriously shocked and repelled; then he is moved to doubt and hot denial, and finally, like the Pollit children again, he becomes indifferent, and the author is obliged to pile up a whole heap of Gothic horrors at the end to attract his numbed attention.

The book was clearly intended to shock, but perhaps it is in a way more shocking than the author intended. For example: if you want to excite dislike for a character you will either caricature him or flay him—you will not do both at once, because the methods are incompatible; yet that is precisely what Miss Stead is trying to do, with curiously chilling results. Furthermore, though there is a compulsive circumstantiality of detail in the book, the sense of reality is feeble. The action takes place during the Roosevelt administration, when Samuel Pollit is supposed to be between thirty-eight and forty years old; yet all his taste, his slang, and his opinions date from twenty or thirty years earlier; no young New Dealer, for example, would talk about "Teddy" Roosevelt, or display such a close acquaintance with the works of Artemus Ward. There is a dislocation in time here, and there is also a dislocation in geography. Some of Miss Stead's most strikingly squalid effects are got from the use of slang that is surely not American but British—"choc" for chocolate, "veg" for vegetables, "cawf" for coffee. In another way still, she fails to imagine her characters concretely. She makes Sam Pollit speak a frightful Artemus Ward language, yet many of the errors she pins on him are not errors at all but phonetic transcriptions of ordinary speech: why write out "my pretty made," "dickshunaries," "stinx," "aneshunt" (for ancient), "bin" (for been), "two shakes of a dead lamb's tale"? How else does anyone pronounce these words?

With its callousness, its imperfect reception (in the radio sense) of the real world, its blunt, bludgeoning manner, its outsize measurements and its enormous energy potential, this novel is a sort of mechanical monstrosity, like Electro at the World's Fair. But it is the sort of monstrosity that is highly esteemed today when our culture (or its leaders) is feeling itself soft and puny.

MARY MCCARTHY

Homes for Dukhobors

Slava Bohu, The Story of the Dukhobors, by J. F. C. Wright. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 438 pages. $3.50.

NU (as the author would say), this is a highly entertaining account of what the Dukhobors did, or declined to do, in Caucasia and Canada. Although the first chapters dealing with the history of the movement are anything but dull, the real fun starts when the bearded babes have been shipped to the remote wood selected for them by hopeful humanitarians. King Lear and his Fool lost on a Heath, the Little White Cows in "South Wind," Northern fairy tales, the glamorous, albeit fast, colors of modern journalism—such are some of the various impressions and associations suggested by Mr. Wright's work.

The exact recipe (a little flogging and lots of Siberia) which the Russian government used in trying to cure a remarkably obstinate sect of its aversion for military service was doubtless a nauseating affair; but when another, more patient, state saw its own laws ignored by those difficult people and solemnly herded them into air-conditioned prisons, persecution remained persecution from the Dukhobor point of view. Indeed, they must have preferred the *ispravnik* to the sheriff, as a sock on the jaw must have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conveyed a plainer mode of martyrdom than did the unintelligible exigences of a foreign police force.

A queer flaw in the morality of a movement cannot help affecting its faith in some queer way, and in the Dukhobors' case there was a flaw, which Mr. Wright defines very neatly. It is one thing to refuse obedience to the state because "we have no master except God"; but the situation is entirely different when this assertion is a deliberate falsehood. For there was a definite man behind God, and that man was Peter Verigin.

The secret of this leadership was kept with remarkable care and success. Verigin, an exile in Siberia, happened to come across the teachings of Tolstoy and, without acknowledging his sources, infused a few Tolstoyan ideas into the sermons he sent to his distant flock. Tolstoy, who was quite unaware of Verigin's existence, experienced a pleasant shock when casual contact with some Dukhobors revealed the amazing fact that his own views were being naïvely professed by ignorant muzhiks. Without Tolstoy's help, the exodus to Canada would hardly have taken place. There were among the Dukhobors, to be sure, many fine fellows and stanch Christians; but when one reads of their childish behavior and futile feuds, one feels somehow that the whole trend of the movement would have been historically far more important had not that initial cunning (inspired by practical purposes) subtly corrupted its core.

Such passages as the descriptions of the voyage and of stark-naked Russians flaunting God's white uniforms in the shocked silence of Main Street, are very vividly done; so is the picture of Verigin Jr., who succeeded to the Dukhobor throne after his father had been killed by an anonymous bomb, and who was far more interested in the last syllable of his name than in religious matters.

An irritating feature of the book is Mr. Wright's dismal trick of sticking in Russian words, all of which are misspelled or misplaced, or ridiculously wrong. It is always rather perilous for a writer to try to toy with a foreign idiom. I like to recall the case of the famous Russian writer Herzen who, living in Putney and knowing very little English, illustrated a brilliant essay on the Britisher's innate contempt for poverty by the unfortunate remark that the worst invective commonly heard in London streets was the word "beggar." V. NABOKOV

A Reader's List

SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE EARTH, by Ralph Barton Perry (Vanguard, $1.50). Professor Perry marshals philosophic thought, from Plato down, to affirm a positive democracy. Readers may disagree with his formula for defending democracy, which includes restricting liberty for anti-libertarian groups, but it is hard to quarrel with such excellent diagnoses as his chapter on "The Philosophical Roots of Totalitarianism." For a tract, the book is unusually literate, cool-headed and readable.

LIFE ON OTHER WORLDS, by Spencer Jones (Macmillan, $3). Britain's Astronomer Royal reviews the evidence for and against extra-terrestrial life in a fascinating personally conducted tour among the universes. This evidence—drawn from astronomy, physics, geology and biochemistry—results in the cautious verdict of "possible, but not proven—and highly improbable." It seems that there was really life on Mars ages ago—and that ages hence, when Earth is done for, everything will begin again on Venus, no less. Romancers, take notice!

RACE: SCIENCE AND POLITICS, by Ruth Benedict (Modern Age, $2.50). "The history of national racism is the history of chauvinism." Around this familiar theme Dr. Benedict has written an admirable and scholarly book fully deserving the high praise given it by her great teacher in anthropology, Franz Boas. In a vigorous style and with close attention to the latest findings in biology, genetics and ethnology, Dr. Benedict exposes the stubborn fallacies of race prejudice and pleads for the kind of democracy that must eventually liquidate them. A tract for the times, and a genuine contribution to sound popular knowledge.

Fiction

WESTWARD THE TIDE, by Harold Sinclair (Doubleday, Doran, $2.50). An absorbing historical novel based on George Rogers Clark's audacious capture of the British forts in the Illinois Territory during the Revolutionary War. There is a hooked-on love story that may be ignored; otherwise this is stirring stuff told with simplicity, directness and a nice regard for history.

GIVE ME LIBERTY, by John Erskine (Stokes, $2.50). A novel about the colonial revolt against England as it developed among the planters of Tidewater Virginia. The hero is a nice youngster who wishes people didn't have to fight; but his neighbor and hero is Patrick Henry, who insists on liberty or and is very persuasive. Mr. Erskine is as urbane about "no taxation without representation" as he is about most things.

Contributors

HERBERT BRUCE BROUGHAM is an economic and financial consultant and writer on management engineering. He was for several years an editorial writer on the staff of The New York Times and associate editor of The Philadelphia Public Ledger.

ALBERT HORLINGS has published two Middle Western weeklies, taught in the University of Hawaii and worked for newspapers and magazines in Omaha, Pittsburgh and New York.

RICHARD EBERHART is the author of two books of verse, "Reading the Spirit" and "Song and Idea."

DALE KRAMER is from Sigourney, Iowa, near Cedar Rapids. He has contributed to Harpers, The Survey Graphic, The Forum, The Nation and other magazines.

MAX LERNER is professor of Political Science at Williams College and author of two books, "It is Later Than You Think" and "Ideas Are Weapons."

BERTRAM D. WOLFE is the author of "Portrait of America" and "Portrait of Mexico," in collaboration with Diego Rivera.

SOLOMON F. BLOOM is a member of the History Department of Brooklyn College. His book "The World of Nations: A Study of the National Implications in the Work of Karl Marx," will be published in February.

LINDSAY ROGERS is Burgess Professor of Public Law at Columbia University and has published several volumes on public law and administration.

MARY MCCARTHY was formerly an editor of Partisan Review. She has contributed to The Nation and The Southern Review as well as The New Republic.

V. NABOKOV is a Russian novelist. Two of his books have been translated into English, "Laughter in the Dark" and "Despair."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED